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People and Politics
in
Early Mediaeval India
(1206—1398 A.D.)

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To my Parents

DR. SACHI KANTA SEN, M.B.

and

SRIMATI SNEHALATA SEN

PREFACE

The Sultan in early mediaeval India, in spite of his theoretical allegiance to the Caliph, and obedience to the Islamic law, was the *defacto* ruler of the State, and the nobility, the Amirs and Maliks formed the ruling class. To incur their displeasure was to lose the Crown, but at the same time to allow them a free hand was dangerous for peace and security of the land. In fact, the Sultan was only a recognised leader of the ruling community. His task was to maintain his pre-eminence and leadership. The Turkish Amir constituted a determined minority and zealously guarded their privileges. These Turkish Amirs were more than often recruited from slaves. It was their community of interest and chauvinism that kept them together and united them at any time against any attempt of the Indian Amirs and Maliks to gain authority.

But the influence of the Turkish conquerors was confined in and around cities, and the fortified places garrisoned by them. The power and authority of the tributary and semi-independent Hindu rulers remained intact outside this area. The Rais or Hindu rulers of India who submitted to the Turkish ruler and paid tribute, enjoyed and retained their authority over the area under their possession. At the earliest possible opportunity they used to take up arms against a weak ruler, and we find in contemporary accounts how the same place had to be conquered by the Turks in successive periods. Again the authority of the revenue collectors—*Mugaddams*, *Chaudhiries* and *Khuts* and village headmen remained unaltered in spite of the transfer of power in the hands of the Turkish conquerors of India. Out of necessity, the Turkish rulers had to rely to a large extent upon their co-operation for keeping the day to day administration going. But the growth of the power of the upper class Hindu was feared because in case of an alliance between the plebeians and patricians of indigenous Indian society the basis of the Turkish rule in India would have been shaken to the root.

The policy of the Sultanate was to keep the *rai'yats* in favour. The preservation of the village communities, for better or worse, in India through so many centuries of change and turmoil was not merely due to the policy or the tendency of each succeeding conqueror, it was also largely due to the fact

that the villagers in India resisted any attempt to infringe on their way of life. In India, the rural people scarcely took any interest in the day to day politics or in the change of dynasties but yet it was they who shouldered the whole economic burden, and in case of any major change in revenue or fiscal policy the rulers of the country had to take into consideration the chain of reaction that would follow in the myriads of villages scattered throughout the country.

The Turkish conquest of India had revolutionized urban life. The Karkhans of those days needed slaves as well as free workers. All kinds of trained artisans lived in the city in enormous number and their ranks were swelled by other city poor. Unemployment and poverty among them often led to distress and distress to rebellion. The merchants, the unemployed poor, the artisans and the labourers were not mere silent spectators to the policy adopted by the Sultans, and they occasionally voiced their grievances. The citizens of Delhi were conspicuous in this respect. The construction of public buildings undertaken by the government was directed to provide for the unemployed. The practice of charity by the Sultans and nobles was also meant to satisfy the urban poor. The economic reforms and measures of rulers like Sultan Alau'd-Din Kharji succeeded largely, because in spite of apparent stringency, these measures gave relief to the city poor. Delhi and its populace took an active interest in politics and it is absolutely necessary to appreciate their economic and social background for a proper understanding of the history of early mediaeval India.

The Sultans also had to conciliate, control and keep in check the turbulent, war like and semi-independent tribes and clans such as Khokhars, Jats, Meos and other tribes scattered all over the sub-continent. When placed in desperate position some of them like Khokhars co-operated with Mongol invaders. The Sultans had to remain alert for keeping the tribes under control. The possibility of disaffection both in the cities and in the countryside forced the ruling caste to obey customary rights and obligations. Many activities of the State apart from collection of revenue and maintenance of peace and order were undertaken to satisfy the people. The grandeur and dignity of the court was scrupulously upheld to enhance the prestige of the Sultan. Amongst the causes of rebellion described by Sultan Alau'd-Din Khalji was the ignorance of the Sultan about the condition of his subjects. In fact, so long as the Sultans

of Delhi kept themselves in touch with the condition of the masses, the basis of the Turkish rule remained firm.

II

Contemporary chronicles however scarcely take account of the life of the commoner. For the historians of those days the plodding peasant carrying on his shoulder the whole burden of the economic life and paying for the luxury of the rich, scarcely existed. The drudgery of the common man, his toils and troubles occupy very few pages of the history written by court historians. They are more busy in recording trivial and insignificant events in the life of Amirs and Malikis. Historians so far have neglected even those facts about the common man's assertion of his rights that have percolated through court chroniclers. Another difficulty that haunts us is the tendency to attach undue importance to anything recorded in Persian and to ignore the ballads, poems, and literature of indigenous origin which, sometimes, if not often, throw lurid light on many aspects of popular life.

The year 1206 A.D. is generally taken as the starting point for a history of early mediaeval India. But because history is a continuation of past events, therefore, a knowledge of the rulers of Ghazna and Ghor who paved the path for the establishment of the Turkish rule in India is essential. The *Kitabu'l Yamini* of al-Utbi brings the history of Subuktigin and Sultan Mahmud up to 411 A.H. (1020 A.D.). Utbi did not care much for administrative detail, yet being a contemporary account his book has an authenticity which other works lack. The *Zainu'l Akhbar* of Abu Sa'id al Gardizi is primarily a history of Persia but it throws light on the career of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna. The *Tarikh-i Baihaqi* of Abu'l Fazl Muhammad bin Hussain al-Baihaqi gives a history of Sultan Mahmud and Ma'sud and their predecessors. The *Taju'l Maasir* of Hasan Nizami is a history of India from 587 A.H. (1191 A.D.) to 624 A.H. (1228-9 A.D.). He indulges in unnecessary descriptions and diversions. His object is merely to record the victory acquired in the name of God and religion over the 'crow-faced Hindu' (A.S.B. Mss. FF 43). He ignores such important events as the defeat of Muhammad bin Sam in the first battle of Tara'in 1191 A.D. Minhaju'd-Din Abu'umar bin Siraju'd-Din Juzjani popularly known as Minhaj-u's Siraj in his famous compendium of Muslim history, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* gives

a connected account of the occurrences and is generally correct in dates and facts. He attached himself with the Turkish faction of the court and men like Imadu'd-Din Raihan who opposed it received scanty justice at his hand. Moreover, Minhaj's interest mainly lay with the life at the court and the future of nobles, he did not take much interest in the toils of the common man. It is only as a by-product that we occasionally get the glimpse of the popular forces in the country such as the initiative taken by the people at Lakhnawati in resisting for three days the invasion of Arslan Khan-i-Sanjar in the absence of its governor. Minhaju'd-Din did not continue his history down to the death of Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Mahmud. The work has been ably translated by Major Raverty who has added valuable notes and explanations. Besides the above-mentioned authorities *Kamilu'l tawarikh*, a history of Central Asia compiled in 1230 A.D., of Abdu'l Hasan popularly known as Ibnu'l Asir gives a succinct account of Muhammad Ghori's conquest of Hindustan. Another valuable contemporary work is Fakhri-Mudabir's *Tarikh-i-Fakhru'd-Din Mubarak Shahi* which deals with the early period of Turkish rule in India.

The *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* of Zia'u'd-Din Barani is a history of the Kings of Delhi from the reign of Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban (1265-87 A.D.) to the sixth year of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq's reign (i.e. 1356 A.D.). Barani takes up the thread of Indian history after six years from where Minhaju'd-Din had left it. Barani's intellectual make-up is extremely reactionary. Thus according to him history is meant for the chosen few not for the unprivileged many [see *T-i-A* (B.I.) p. 9]. His orthodox outlook is set forth in his work. To take one illustration from *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* while discussing the regulations of Sultan Alau'd-Din Khalji Barani says that "Sultan Alau'd-Din asked his councillors to prepare schedule and regulations with a view to chastising the Hindus". In this and such other passages the word *Hindu* is miselading. It has been rightly pointed out by Moreland that "the content makes it plain that he is thinking of the upper classes, not of the peasants" (*Agrarian System of Moslem India* p. 32n). Barani is a biased historian and an unfair narrator, inaccurate in date and chronology. But the author held an important post in the revenue department and was fully acquainted with revenue administration which he described in detail. He has also supplied a wealth of information about the social and economic life of the country. Barani has been credited with other works like *Fatawa-i-*

Jahandari in which he sets forth the rules and conduct that a Muslim ruler should follow.

An official named Shamsi Siraj 'Afif wrote his book *Ta'rikh-i-Firuz Shahi* after Timur's departure in 1398 A.D. It deals extensively with the reign of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq. 'Afif has faithfully related about the protests registered by merchants of Delhi against unlawful imposts as also the resistance offered by the Brahmins against the imposition of *Jizyah*. The *Sirat-i-Firuz Shahi* an anonymous work completed in 1370 and the *Fatuh-i-Firuz Shahi* containing the ordinances of Firuz Shah's reign are valuable sources for the history of Firuz Shah's reign. The *Mulfuzat-i-Timuri* and the *Zafarnama* of Sharfu'd-Din Yazadi deals with the incursion of Amir Timur in India.

In contemporary literature Amir Khusraw's name stands out foremost. Khusraw was a prolific writer and his works include besides his historical writing many Masnavis and Diwans. As a historian he slurs over facts which goes against his patron yet Khusraw's work bears the supreme quality of being free from lies. He is also exact in dates and details. Amir Khusraw was in love with all that pertained to his country. The birds, the trees, the flowers and the men of Hindustan including Hindus were far superior to anything found outside India. A superficial observer may lead to the conclusion that he was inspired by a zeal against the Hindus, because political history of the age had a great influence over his literature. But Khusraw's outlook was singularly tolerant and an examination of his poems can leave no other impression. A contemporary of Khusraw, Hasan Sijzi wrote in his book *Fuwadu'l-Fuwad* the gems of the sayings of Saint Nizamu'd-Din Auliya. The lyrical poems of Badrud-Din Muhammad known as *Badrghach* were composed during the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq and is chiefly a panegyric composed in praise of the Sultan. The *Futuh-i-Salatin* of 'Isami gives the history of India from the Ghaznavids to Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq. It is a poetical work composed in 1350 A.D. 'Isami had suffered at the hands of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq and dedicated his work to Alau'd-Din Hasan Bahamni. He is a vehement critic of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq and a panegyrist of Sultan Alau'd-Din Khalji. He lends support to Ibn Battuta's view about the transfer of capital by stating that it was due to Sultan's dislike of the people of Delhi and gives a hyperbolic

description of the suffering of the people during the change of the capital.

Among important biographical works mention may be made of *Siyarū'l-Auliya* by Mir Khurd, the *Akhbaru'l-Akhyar* by Abdu'l Haqq, the famous author of *Ta'rikh-i-Haqqi* and the *Rahatu'l-Qulub* of Shaikh Nizamu'd-Din Auliya. The *Insha-i-Mahru* of 'Ain-ul-Mulk Multani, a minister of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq is a collection of letters.

Among provincial histories the *Chachnama* translated from original Arabic into Persian by Muhammad 'Ali bin Hamid bin Abu Bakr Kufi is an invaluable source for the conquest of Sind by the Arabs and the condition of that country prior to the conquest. The *Ta'rikh-i-Sind* alias *Ta'rikh-i-Masumi* by Mir Muhammad Ma'sum is a later history. It narrates in detail the history of Sind from Muhammadan conquest down to the annexation of the province by Akbar. The local history of Gujrat is related by *Mirat-i-Sikandari* composed in the 17th century and *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* which brings down the history of Gujrat from the earliest time to A.H. 1174 (A.D. 1760-61). Hajju'd Dabir's work *Zafaru'l Wali* is an Arabic history of Gujrat. The *Riyazu's Salatin* by Ghulam Husain Salim and the *Siyaru'l Mutakharin* by Ghulam Husain Tabatabai are histories of Bengal composed in the 18th century.

Among later historians Yahiya bin Ahmad bin 'Abdullah Sirhindi is a contemporary chronicler of the Sultans of Sayyid dynasty. His work *Ta'rikh-i-Mubarak Shahi* is a general history from Muhammad bin Sam to Sultan Mubarak Shah. The *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* of Nizamu'd-Din Ahmad and the *Muntakhabu't-Twarikh* of 'Abdul'l Qadir Badaoni are two general histories of India from early Muslim rule in India down to Akbar in whose reign they were written. The *Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi* by Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah commonly called Ferishta is a general history of India from Ghaznavis down to A.H. 1015 (A.D. 1606-1607).

The *Privirajraso* of Chand Bardai, the *Mymansing Gitika* (edited by Dineshchandra Sen), the *AssamBuranjis* (edited by S. K. Bhuyan), the *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* and such other indigenous sources though deficient in many respects, contains mines of information about the life of the people in early mediaeval India.

Among foreign travellers of the age Abu Raihan Al-Biruni

was a native of Khiva. He was a great scholar in Arabic and Persian and took interest in mathematic, medicine, philosophy, theology religion, astronomy and astrology. He came to Banras to study Sanskrit. Al-Biruni has correctly analysed the causes of the failure of the Hindu rulers to resist Turkish invasion. He has painted the greed and ignorance of the kings and rulers of India who were parochial in their outlook. As the ordinary man in India had no opportunity for following intellectual pursuit because he was kept down under thralldom by 'Priestly tricks' and as the Sudras and Vaisyas stood the chance of losing their tongue for reciting Vedas, the handful of Brahmin and Kshatriya leaders of Hindu society led the Indian people to a narrow alley of a most insular philosophical outlook that barred the development of a rigorous political life. The difference between the rich and the poor was apparent to Al-Biruni who says that in India "those who want little dress are content to dress in a rag of two finger's breath" while some wear "trousers lined with so much cotton as would suffice to make a number of counterpanes and saddle rags".

Ibn Battuta, the famous Moorish traveller came to India in the year 1333 A.D. His account is known as the *Tuhfatul Nuzzarfi Ghara'ibul Amsr*. The *Rihla* or account of travel of Ibn Battuta contains authentic informations of an eyewitness about the social, political and administrative condition of India during the days of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq. But Ibn Battuta has recorded every gossip and rumour that came his way and his statements cannot be accepted without critical examination. Ibn Battuta gives us an insight into the court and city life of those days. Among others Marcopolo the Venetian traveller, visited Southern India in the thirteenth century. Another writer Shihabu'd-Din Ahmad who never visited this country recorded accounts of India narrated to him by men like Shaikh Mubarak. Archaeological and numismatic evidence supplement the informations supplied by the historians and travellers of the age and the reports of the *Archaeological Survey of India* and the *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica* together with the works of numismatists like Thomas and H. N. Wright are invaluable in this respect.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude to Prof. Susobhan Sarkar who encouraged me to complete this research and gave valuable suggestions. I am also deeply obliged to Dr. M. Ishaque, Founder Secretary Iran

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ABBREVIATIONS

Aḡf	.. <i>Ta'rikh-i-Firuz Shahi</i> by Shamsi Siraj 'Aḡf (B.I).
Aḡhnides	.. <i>Muhammadian Theories of Finance</i> by N. P. Aḡhnides.
Agrarian System	.. <i>Agrarian System of Moslem India</i> by W. H. Moreland.
Badaoni	.. <i>Muntakhabu't-Twarikh</i> by 'Abdu'l Qadir Badaoni (B.I).
Barani	.. <i>Ta'rikh-i-Firuz Shahi</i> by Ziaud-Barani (B.I).
Chronicles	.. <i>Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi</i> by E. Thomas.
C.H.I.	.. <i>Cambridge History of India.</i>
E and D	.. <i>History of India as told by its own Historians</i> by Sir H. M. Elliot and edited by Prof. John Dowson.
E.I.M.	.. <i>Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica.</i>
Futuh	.. <i>Futuhu's-Salatin</i> by Isami (Agra Ed.).
Ferishta	.. <i>Ta'rikh-i-Ferishta</i> (Bombay Ed.).
J.A.S.B.	.. <i>Journal, Asiatic Society of Bengal.</i>
J.R.A.S.	.. <i>Journal, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.</i>
I.H.Q.	.. <i>Indian Historical Quarterly.</i>
I.H.C.	.. <i>Indian History Congress Proceedings.</i>
Khazain	.. <i>Khaza'inu'l-Futuh</i> by Amir Khusraw.
Rehla	.. <i>Rehla of Ibn Battuta.</i> Eng. trans. by Dr. A. M. Husain. (Gaekwad Oriental Series No. CXXII).
Raverty	.. English translation of <i>Tabaqat-i-Nasiri</i> of Minhaj'u'd-Din by Major H. G. Raverty.
T-i-N	.. <i>Tabaqat-i-Nasiri</i> (B.I).
T.M.S.	.. <i>Ta'rikh-i-Mubarak Shahi</i> by Yahiya bin Ahmad bin 'Abdu'llah Sirhindi (B.I).
T-i-A	.. <i>Tabaqat-i-Akbari</i> by Nizamu'd-Din Ahmad (B.I).



INTRODUCTION

The object of this study is to find out the influences that the common people could exercise on the statesmen and rulers of Mediaeval India, from the accession of Qutbu'd-Din Aibak in 1206 to the inroad of Air Timur in Hindustan in 1398. The age was of course quite different from modern times, yet it will be seen that behind even the most despotic scheme of the most-hated tyrant of Mediaeval India lurked some consideration of the reaction that his policy would have among the masses.

The middle ages in history, not only of India but also of other countries, saw the predominance of despots. But no Government however despotic can totally ignore the masses. In India too, in spite of the parochial and secluded life led by the people in the villages, the rulers had often to take into consideration not only the opinion of the selected few but also of the neglected many. Whenever and wherever an unthinking despot disturbed in a high-handed way the peace of the agriculturist and the ordinary man in the street, he came to face immense difficulty in maintaining his position.

In India, as in all other countries, the urban population, specially those living in or around the metropolis, were comparatively more vocal than the people living in the villages; but even the latter occasionally, that is, when they were suddenly deprived of their traditional way of living by an inconsiderate despot, attempted to resist an infringement of their peaceful life.

The discussion in the following pages has been first confined to the Sultans and the Maliks and Amirs, who dominated the political arena and supply the general background to our subject. Then follows an analysis of the part played by the citizens of Delhi, at different periods of the Sultanate. The discussion in the subsequent chapters turns to the part played by other common people in the urban and rural politics of Mediaeval India. In spite of the limitations of the age, and the natural scarcity of information in the writings of the contemporary court chroniclers, far removed from the mass of the people, it will be seen in conclusion that the common man in India was not entirely a dumb spectator to all the changes imposed upon him by his mediaeval rulers.

PART I

CHAPTER I

THE MEDIAEVAL SULTANATE

I

The Caliph and the Sultan

In the mediaeval political system in India, the Sultan was the man in control of affairs. In theory, the Sultan owed allegiance to the Caliph whose name must be mentioned in the address (*Khutbah*) during the public Friday prayer and minted on the coins. Theoretically, therefore, the Turkish Sultans depended for their authority on the Caliph, because, in the absence of the Prophet, the Muslim Community looked upon the Caliph as the successor of the founder of Islam and its *de jure* head.

In Islam, there are no two swords, a spiritual and a temporal; consequently there is no separation between the State and the Church.¹ The Caliph therefore claimed allegiance from all Muslims. But unhesitating effective obedience to one Caliph was an impossibility in the Muslim world after the growth of strong independent monarchies under powerful Muslim rulers.² A compromise was therefore arrived at by which an independent Muslim ruler was recognised as the vicegerent of the Caliph. Thus the conscientious were freed from their scruples.³ Even in an age when the 'Abbasid Caliphs like Qadir-bi'llah were without any real authority, they were approached by mightier rulers like Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna for formal recognition of their position.⁴ Such recognition sprang from religious reverence only, since political power had passed out of the grasp of the Caliphs.⁵

Though most of the Turkish Sultans of Delhi formally obtained recognition from the Caliph of Baghdad, yet such recognition was thus a formal affair, and did not in the final analysis curb or enhance their actual power. Sultan Qutbu'd-Din Aibak (1206-10 A.D.) and his son Aram Shah (1210 A.D.) perhaps had too little time to think about any recognition from Baghdad. Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Iltutmish was therefore the

first Sultan of Delhi to acknowledge the supremacy of the Caliph in 622 A.H. (1225 A.D.).⁶ But such recognition did not prevent him from destroying Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din 'Iwaz Khalji, the independent ruler of Bengal, who was also recognised by the Caliph.⁷ At the time of his danger, the recognition from Baghdad did not help the ruler of Bengal. The Turkish rulers of India did not evidently hesitate to oust a ruler recognised by the same Caliph from whom they were glad to receive robes of honour.

During the period that followed the death of Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Iltutmish in 633 A.H. (1235 A.D.), the name of the successive Caliphs appeared on the Delhi coins.⁸ Even when Baghdad, the seat of the Caliphate and the centre of *Daru'l-Islam*, was destroyed and Caliph Musta'asim was killed with inhuman barbarity by Hulagu Khan, a descendent of Chingiz Khan (651 A.H., 1258 A.D.),⁹ the Sultans of Delhi continued the name of the martyred Caliph on their coinage till 695 A.H. (1296 A.D.).¹⁰ It cannot be alleged that they were unaware of the catastrophe, because Minhaju'd-Din, the contemporary court chronicler, describes the Mongol eruption and its horrors in his celebrated book *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* in detail. The fiction of the Caliphate was being maintained at Delhi, because it served the purpose of the ruling dynasty to keep alive the myth of the Khilafat, and to pose as the rightful representatives of the Caliph.

When Jalalu'd-Din Khalji ascended the throne in 689 A.H. (1290 A.D.), ousting the descendants of Sultan Balban, this fiction of the Sultan as the representative of the Caliph of Baghdad was maintained. Sultan Jalalu'd-Din inscribed the name of the late Caliph Musta'asim on his coins¹¹ to prove the legality of his rule, because he was looked upon by many as an usurper. Delhi, however, was a far cry from Baghdad, and after the fall of the latter before Mongol onslaught in the year 1258, the 'Abbasids were fugitives in Egypt. Naturally under the circumstances there was some inclination to regard the Sultan of Delhi himself as the Caliph of the age.¹² Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji went so far as to dream of establishing a separate religion, but was persuaded to give up the project by 'Ala'u'l-Mulk, the Kotwal of Delhi.¹³ In his coins and inscriptions the Sultan took the title as the right hand of the Caliph (Yaminu'l-Khilafat)¹⁴, because obviously he did not in spite of vagaries find it worth while to involve himself in religious adventures in view of practical considerations and the interest of the State.

Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji was satisfied with the substance of power. His son Qutbu'd-Din Mubarak Khalji broke however with the traditional form of calling the Sultan the agent of the Caliph, and assumed the title of Khalifah of the God of heaven and earth.¹⁴ Celebrated poets of the age like Amir Khusraw also refer to the Sultan as Khalifah¹⁵ and thus popularised his assumption of the title. For the first time in Indian history, a Sultan of Delhi did not care to pay homage to the Caliph. Such assumption of the title of Caliph by the Sultan, however, did not seem to have bothered his subjects; it did not in any way affect their loyalty towards the Sultan. On the other hand, due to the comparative peace in the north-west frontier for the non-recurrence of the Mongol raids, and as a result of the relaxation of the strict rules and regulations of the previous reign, the people, we are told, heaved a sigh of relief and remained quite contented.¹⁷

The next two rulers of Delhi, however, discarded this innovation of Sultan Qutbu'd-Din Mubarak Khalji.¹⁸ This was natural because both Khusraw Khan, who assumed the title of Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Khusraw Shah, and Ghazi Malik, who assumed the title of Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq, were eager to consolidate their authority and legalise their usurpation.

Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq in the latter part of his reign made an emphatic demonstration of his loyalty towards the Caliph. The recurrence of rebellion in different parts of his far-flung empire seems to have induced him to gain a fresh investiture from the 'Abbasid Caliph and thus strengthen his political authority.¹⁹ In 744 A.H., Haji Sa'id Sarsari, an envoy of the Caliph Al-Hakim II, arrived from Egypt in response to the Sultan's appeal²⁰ to hand over the investiture from the Caliph. A great reception was given to him and the Sultan went in person to receive the honoured guest.²¹ The Sultan made great public demonstration of his submission to the Caliph. He evidently suffered under the illusion that such a show of obedience to the Caliph would help him to restore order in his dominion and to stop the recurrence of disturbance in the empire. But quite contrary to this expectation of the Sultan, rebellions continued to take place in several parts of his dominion even after he had received investiture from the hand of the Caliph. The recognition by the Caliph did not therefore in any way help the Sultan in winning back the loyalty of his subjects.

Still the form was being maintained and the system conti-

nued. During the days of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq, the Khalifah sent robes of honour for the Sultan, his son Fath Khan, and also for his Wazir Khan-i-Jahan.²² The Sayyidi rulers of Delhi except its founder Khizr Khan²³ and the Lodi Sultans barring Ibrahim Lodi continued the practice.²⁴

The experiments made by Sultan Qutbu'd-Din Mubarak Khalji and Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, indicated above, amply demonstrate that non-recognition or recognition of the headship of the Khalifah did not decrease or enhance the loyalty of Indian subjects or materially affect the power and prestige of the Sultan. Thus the formal blessing from a distant Caliph cannot be reckoned as a decisive factor in mediaeval Indian politics. Yet the constant repetition of the formality illustrates the pull of Islamic tradition on the Delhi Sultans who always claimed to be orthodox Sunni Muslims. The robe of honour and investiture from the Caliph added new feathers to the cap of the ruler. Beyond this show and satisfaction of rectitude, the recognition from a distant Caliph did not materially influence the actual power of the monarch.

II

Legal Checks on the Sultan's Autocracy

The despotism of the Turkish Sultans was limited by Islamic Law because obedience to the ruler was supposed to be conditional upon his obedience to the *Shari'at*.²⁵ The sovereigns had no authority to transgress the law or make new laws. Muhammadan law consists of two parts : religious and secular. Each has its special application. The religious or canon law as defined by consensus of opinion (*Ijma'-i-Ummat*)²⁶ cannot be altered by the sovereign. Again, the right to interpret the law was claimed by the theologians, the Ulama and the Fuqaha. The Sultan was advised to respect the learned and to consult them on questions of law.²⁷ The Sultan was of course entitled to issue *farmans* and ordinances for the guidance of his servants, but such rules and regulations as were issued by him were called *Qanun-i-Shahi* and applied to the common law as opposed to canon law.

In a mediaeval state where all the members of the governing class and many of their subjects were believers in Islam, it was not possible theoretically to violate the *Shari'at* or to act

in defiance of its injunctions. Thus the Islamic laws seemed to impose checks upon an attempt at unbridled autocracy.

But in fact the Sultans did not care overmuch about obeying even the spiritual law. Most of them were ignorant about it, and the Jurists, except a few like Qazi Mughisu'd-Din²⁸, were subservient to the Sultans. In order to reconcile the actual realities with the Islamic ideal, they found out peculiar compromises in favour of the ruler.²⁹ The *Shari'at* recognised neither monarchy nor a governing class nor is there any rule of succession prescribed; yet custom and convention and the theory of later Jurists gave sanction to the political system that had come into existence.³⁰ The Muslim empires and empire builders of the mediaeval age followed a political system for which it is vain to adduce support from the *Shari'at*. The need of a large kingdom, for centralised administration, led to the creation of the Despotic State.

In course of time the ruler came to be regarded as the shadow of God on Earth.³¹ To some there was nothing higher or greater than the Throne, after the Prophet.³² A group of thinkers called *Ikhwanu's-Safa* declared that the kings are Caliphs of God upon earth.³³ Though such exaltation of monarchy did not receive universal support³⁴, yet rulers came to regard the monarchy as a blessing of God.³⁵ Poets compared the Sultan with the sun that illuminates the whole world with its rays.³⁶

As a natural corollary to such exaltation of monarchy, the rulers acted despotically³⁷, and the *Mulk* or power-state came into being. In it the rulers took measures unapproved by the Islamic Law, to keep themselves in power. Such measures for punishing the rebels and for subduing anarchy³⁸, it may be argued, were necessary to keep the turbulent in check; but certainly they were in direct violation of the Islamic ideal. The governing class however was prepared to stoop to any length to maintain their authority.

The Turkish Sultans squandered fabulous sums from the public treasury to cater to their personal needs. Barani³⁹ has recorded an interesting and illuminating discussion on the subject between Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji and Qazi Mughisu'd-Din. In reply to an enquiry of the Sultan regarding the amount of wealth he was entitled to take from the public treasury, the Qazi pointed out that according to law the Sultan was entitled to the pay of a soldier (i.e. 234 *tankas*) or the pay of a Malik or at the most that much which was sufficient to maintain the dignity of the Sultan. All the crores of money

and valuables drawn by the Sultan from the public treasury for his personal pleasure and comfort were unapproved by the Islamic Law.⁴⁰ But it would be the height of injustice to blame Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji alone for drawing enormous sums from the treasury. Almost all the Turkish Sultans and the Amirs and Maliks basked in the sunshine of luxury and comfort. It may be said in their favour that the glamour and grandeur of the court was deemed necessary to inspire awe and reverence into the hearts of the ruled.⁴¹ But certainly Islam did not approve of all such acts instances of which may be multiplied. The Sultans paid only lip service to the canons and principles of their own religion, and the legal checks on their absolutism existed in name only.

The Sultans of Delhi did not also conform to the ideal set forth by the later Jurists who declared that the Sultan is the refuge of the poor, the oppressed and the needy, and justice is the seal of God entrusted to him.⁴² The standard or norm set by the Jurists for a ruler was indeed a high one, and the duties assigned to him were various and manifold.⁴³ Needless to say, their injunctions remained mostly pious wishes. According to all mediaeval thinkers, it is the task of the State not only to guarantee life and property through equity and justice, but also to ensure peace and happiness of the people.⁴⁴ Hardly, if ever, did any Sultan conform to such high ideals. "If the ruler" says Ibn Khaldun "uses force the subjects are corrupted."⁴⁵ But the use of force was inevitable where power was concentrated in the hands of the few and was used mainly in their own interest. The well-known facts of mediaeval Indian history light up the great gulf between ideals and reality.

The question naturally may therefore be asked as to whether there was any other effective check on the despotic power of the ruler. Was he entirely free to act as he pleased or did he take into consideration the consequences of and reactions to his policy among his subjects? No doubt the Amirs and Maliks had a great influence in the State; in case of a weak ruler wielding the sceptre, they were the real power behind the throne. These Amirs and Maliks however belonged to the governing class and shared the aims and objects of the rulers. The question is whether the Sultan and the governing class were in any way obliged to put a bridle to the despotic character of their rule. Further discussion will show that it was not the legal checks, but the fear of opposition from the governed that acted in many cases as a barrier

to the naked despotism of the rulers of the middle ages, at least to a not inconsiderable extent.

NOTES

1. E. I. J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Mediaeval Islam* (Cambridge, 1958), p. 28.
2. Though Jurists like Al-Mawardi prescribe several qualifications for being elected to the office of Caliph (see *Alhikmu's-Sultaniyah*, p. 4), the Caliphate had actually become a monarchy and the Caliph a pre-eminently political figure. See Jurji Zaydan, *Umayyads and 'Abbasids*, p. 74; Arnold, *Caliphate*, pp. 17, 70-71.
3. "It is not possible" says Ibn Khaldun "to appoint two men to the position (of Imam) at the same time. Religious Scholars are generally of this opinion, on the basis of certain traditions. These traditions are found in the book, 'on Leadership' (*Imarah*) in the *Sahih* by Muslim. They expressly indicate that this is so. Others hold that (this prohibition against two Imams) applies only to two Imams in one locality or where they would be close to each other." The *Muqaddimah* of Ibn Khaldun, English translation by Franz Rosenthal, Vol. I, pp. 392-93.
4. Amir Ali, *History of the Saracens*, pp. 306-07.
5. Jurji Zaydan, *Umayyads and 'Abbasids*, pp. 257-59. About the attitude of the Islamic dynasties towards a weak Caliph, Jurji Zaydan says that being unable to assume religious independence they rendered homage to the Caliph for maintaining their position. See also S. Khuda Baksh, *Contribution to the History of Islamic Civilization*, pp. 278-79.
6. H. N. Wright, *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi*, pp. 17, 71.
7. There is no truth in the theory of numismatists from Thomas down to those of our own days that Iwaz issued coins till the year 616 A.H. in the name of Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Iltutmish. *History of Bengal* (Dacca University), Vol. II, p. 28. See also *J.A.B.S.*, 1873.
8. *Chronicles*, pp. 107, 118, 127, 131 etc.
9. Amir Ali, *History of the Saracens*, pp. 398-400.
10. *Chronicles*, p. 145.
11. The name of Caliph Musta'asim continued in the coins of Sultan Jalau'd-Din. His son Sultan Ruknu'd-Din Ibrahim continued the title of Amiru'l-Mu'minin, but omitted the name of the Caliph. *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi*, p. 87.

12. Amir Khusraw in his historical work *Khaza'inul-Futuh* refers to Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji as the Caliph. For instance in one place he declares "the blade of the Khalifah's sword, which is the flame of the lamp of Islam, had now illuminated all the darkness of Hindustan with the light of its guidance." Muhammad Habib, *The Campaign of 'Alau'd-Din Khalji*, (English translation of *Khaza'inul-Futuh*), p. 80; See also Amir Khusraw, *Devul Rani*, pp. 16-18.
13. Barani, p. 263.
14. This was added to the title Nasiru-Amiru'l-Mu'minin. *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultan of Delhi*, p. 88.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
16. Amir Khusraw, *Nuh Siphir*, p. 115.
17. Barani, p. 285.
18. *Chronicles*, pp. 185-86 and 189-91.
19. Ishwari Prasad, *History of the Qaraunah Turks in India*, Vol. I, pp. 175-81.
20. Ghiyath'd-Din Muhammad, a descendent of the 'Abbasids, was accorded a princely reception at Delhi. See *Rehla*, pp. 72-75.
21. The names of those rulers of India who were not recognised by the Khalifah were removed from the *Khutbah*, and so long as the investiture was not received by the Sultan he had suspended the Friday and 'Id prayers which were restored only after the arrival of the envoy of the Caliph in 744 A.H./1342 A.D. Barani, pp. 492-96; *Rehla*, p. 243.
22. Shamsi Siraj Afif, *Ta'rikh-i-Firuz Shahi* (R.I.), pp. 273-74.
23. Khizr Khan caused the *Khutbah* to be read in the name of Timur and his son Shah Rukh. Later on he was allowed to include his name in the *Khutbah*. Arnold, *Caliphate*, p. 118.
24. *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi*, p. 243-50.
25. *Kimiya-i-Sa'adat*, p. 245; *Siyasat Nama*, p. 42; *Ahkamu's-Sultaniyah*, p. 8; Hamidullah, *Muslim Conduct of State*, pp. 174-75.
26. Even the 'Pious Caliphate' was based not upon any injunction from the *Qur'an* but upon *Ijma'*. See Khuda Baksh, *Politics in Islam*, pp. 112-15.
27. Wahed Hussain, *Administration of Justice during Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 13, 14, 154.
28. For an interesting discussion between the Qazi and Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji, see below.
29. In order to fit in his theory of elective Caliphate with facts Mawardi said an election may be announced by a single voice. Four other methods of election were enumerated by him, viz. (a) election by all, (b) election by five persons at least, (c) the precedence set up by Caliph 'Umar who nominated six persons to elect one among them as Caliph, (d) elections by three persons. *Ahkamu's-Sultaniyah*, pp. 4-6.
30. Wahed Hussain, *Theory of Sovereignty in Islam*, pp. 103-69.
31. *Ta'rikh-i-Fakhru'd-Din Mubarak Shahi*, p. 13.

32. Barani, p. 28.
33. Arnold, *Caliphate*, pp. 122-23.
34. Al-Farabi gave the subjects the right to change their ruler, if need be. See Haroon Khan Sherwani, *Early Muslim Political Thought and Administration*, p. 151.
35. Barani, p. 71.
36. *Qasa'id-i-Badr-i-chach*, p. 82.
37. *Political Thought in Mediaeval Islam*, p. 117.
38. To cite a few examples, we may point out here that Sultan Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud threw thousands of rebellious Mewatis under the feet of the elephant (Raverty, p. 855); Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji killed the children of rebellious converted Mongols (Barani, pp. 252-53); the door of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq was never free, according to Ibn Battuta, from an indigent person to be enriched or a living person to be killed (*Rehla*, p. 56). Such examples may be multiplied to show the barbarities that were practised in clear violation of the Islamic Law.
39. *Ta'rikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, pp. 290-95.
40. The Qazi was not too exacting on the question of the Sultan's personal expenditure, as Mr. Qureshi would have us believe, *Administration of the Sultanate* (4th ed.) p. 46; but merely answered the question put to him as an academic expert in Islamic Law.
41. Barani, pp. 29-38. *Rehla*, pp. 57-59.
42. *Ta'rikh-i-Fakhru'd-Din Mubarak Shahi*, pp. 13-14; *Siyasat-Nama*, pp. 9, 33, 42; *Kimiya-i-Sa'adat*, p. 243.
43. (a) Whatever he considers beneficial or harmful for his own self should be considered as such for the subjects.
 (b) He should grant prayers of the needy and afflicted.
 (c) He should refrain from indulging in luxury.
 (d) He should behave gently with all.
 (e) He should try to satisfy every one.
 (f) He should not oblige any one by violating the *Shari'at*.
 (g) He should remember that he is saddled with a great responsibility.
 (h) He should seek the company of the pious and the learned.
 (i) The king should not only refrain from oppression but also check his slaves, servants and agents from doing so.
 (j) He should not be too proud because pride generates anger, and anger inspires a spirit of retaliation which spoils wisdom and leads him away from the right path. *Kimiya-i-Sa'adat*, pp. 245-51.
44. *Political Thought in Mediaeval Islam*, p. 4.
45. *Muqaddimah* (English translation), Vol. I, p. 283.

CHAPTER II

THE ROLE OF ARISTOCRACY IN THE MEDIAEVAL STATE

I

The Turco-Slave Aristocracy

The Turkish Amirs and Maliks who replaced the Hindu ruling class of India deserved the laurels they had won, because they had proved their superiority in the arts of war and in leadership. After the establishment of the Turkish rule in India they formed a class by themselves. Most of these Turkish Amirs and Maliks were originally slaves, and the recruitment of fresh slaves of their own race swelled their rank. They constituted a privileged class in the State. The list of officers in the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* and Barani's *Ta'rikh-i-Firuz Shahi* shows that the posts of authority and influence were practically monopolised by them. This was due to the fact that the Turks considered themselves as the rulers of the country, and were not ready to share power and privilege with those who were outside the charmed circle. They had a sense of superiority over the rest of mankind.¹ It was due to this sense of superiority that the Turkish rulers scrupulously maintained their difference from the Indians—Hindu or Muslim alike. It is their highbrow attitude that paved the path for the growth of an Indian faction in the court.

At the beginning of the establishment of the Turkish rule in India there was rivalry among the Mu'izzi slaves for the division of the empire.² This was natural because these slave officers had helped the building-up of the Ghorian empire, and they considered themselves equal to one another after the death of their common master, Mu'izzu'd-Din Muhammad bin Sam. Qutbu'd-Din Aibak was careful in obtaining their allegiance from them at the time of his accession in 602 A.H./1206 A.D.³ His son Aram Shah was at first crowned at Lahore and then within a short period martyred by the Turkish Amirs who raised Shamsu'd-Din Iltutmish, the fiefholder of Badaon, and the son-in-law of Sultan Qutbu'd-Din, to the throne.⁴ Some among the Turks disliked this change

of ruler, and we hear of an uprising of some blood-thirsty Turks at Delhi. This rebellion was suppressed with difficulty by Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Iltutmish⁶ who had to face much trouble due to the opposition of a section of the Turks. Before the Sultan could consolidate his hold over Hindustan he had to crush the most powerful Mu'izzi slaves. One of them was Sultan Taju'd-Din Yildiz, the ruler of Ghazna, and another was Nasiru'd-Din Quba-chah, ruler of Uchh and Multan.⁸

During the period from the death of Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Iltutmish to the accession of Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Mahmud, the youngest son of the former, in 1246, one member after another of the royal family was placed on the throne by the all-powerful Turkish Amirs and deposed by them.⁷ During Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Mahmud's long reign of nearly twenty years, excepting for a brief period (1253-54), his all-powerful Wazir Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban held all effective power. Thus in the period from the demise of Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Iltutmish to the accession of Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban on the throne in 1265⁸, the Amirs and Maliks were the real power behind the throne.⁹ Again, some among the Amirs and Maliks even aspired to assume the Crown of Delhi if chance should so allow them. Malik 'Izzu'd-Din Balban actually proclaimed himself as the Sultan when Mu'izzu'd-Din Bahram was dethroned and 'Alau'd-Din Mas'ud Shah was placed on the throne (639 A.H./1242 A.D.). But other Amirs and Maliks were not in a mood to tolerate his pretensions, and 'Izzu'd-Din Balban had to remain satisfied with a few fiefs and a permission to possess an elephant.¹⁰ The danger to the throne from powerful Amirs and Maliks induced successive Sultans down to Nasiru'd-Din Mahmud to try to shake off their influence. Their endeavour however was not successful.

It was left to Balban, one of the famous 'Forty slaves' of Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Iltutmish, to restore order in the kingdom by reducing the powerful grandees of the State. Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban had a very high idea of the prestige of the monarch. He made every one afraid of him.¹¹ He avoided intimacy with any one so that he did not cut jokes with any person nor did he allow humorous conversation in his presence.¹² The Sultan had decided to end the long years of anarchy due to the predominance of the Shamsi slaves. He inflicted terrible punishment on the Turkish Amirs and Maliks on slight pretext and thereby enforced justice.¹³ But, behind this apparent show of justice lurked perhaps the fear of the growth

of the power of the Turkish nobility. Where it was not possible to take cover under a show of impartiality and legality the Sultan did not hesitate to take resort to viler methods to achieve his purpose. Shir Khan, a cousin of the Sultan, who had successfully fought against the Mongols in the north-west, never visited the capital after Balban's accession for his strong apprehension that there was an intention on the part of the Sultan to get rid of all the Great Shamsi slaves on some pretext or other. Finding no other way of getting rid of this powerful noble the Sultan had him poisoned to death.¹⁴ Thus Sultan Balban had adopted a deliberate policy of destroying his own kind with the ultimate motive of leaving no rival to compete with his own progeny. His policy, though successful in his life time, did not achieve its object, and after his demise the court factions again regained their sway.

As Bughra Khan, the second son of Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban, had preferred to stay at Lakhnawati, the Sultan had nominated Kaikhusraw, the son of Khan-i-Shahid (the eldest son of Balban), as his successor. But the Malik and Amirs under the leadership of Malik Fakhru'd-Din, the influential Kotwal of Balban's time, placed Mu'izzu'd-Din Kaiqubad on the throne.¹⁵ Sultan Mu'izzu'd-Din Kaiqubad (1287-90),¹⁶ was a young man who devoted himself to pleasure¹⁷, and the real power went to the grip of the court faction headed by Malik Nizamu'd-Din, the nephew and son-in-law of Malik Fakhru'd-Din.¹⁸ The death and removal of Malik Nizamu'd-Din by poisoning did not improve matters. Chaos and confusion followed amidst which the Sultan himself was attacked with paralysis and the court was divided into two rival groups of Turks and Khaljis.¹⁹ The Khaljis seized the person of the boy Sultan Shamsu'd-Din who was placed on the throne during the illness of his father, Sultan Mu'izzu'd-Din Kaiqubad, and carried him to Baharpur²⁰, a place situated six or seven miles east of Old Delhi. Malik Jalalu'd-Din Firuz Khalji, the leader of the Khaljis, came out victorious in the factional fight that followed. He successfully overcame not only the opposition of the Turkish faction headed by Malik Aitamar Kachhan and Malik Aitamar Surkha, but also replaced the Balbani dynasty on the throne and assumed the crown formally in 1290.²¹

The wrangling of the court faction in the latter days of Kaiqubad's reign brings to light the racial chauvinism of the Turks. The difference between the Ilbari Turks and the Khaljis²² was negligible, yet the former was not prepared to brook the latter's preponderance. Moreover, it shows how the

power of the Amirs and Maliks used to grow invariably whenever the ruler was feeble and weak.

II

The Policy of the Khalji Sultans

Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Firuz Khalji ascended the throne at a ripe old age. He suffered from the fear of losing it again, and frankly admitted his fear during his visit to the Red Palace of Sultan Balban.²³ The Sultan who made a show of his reverence for Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban was in fact more concerned with gaining over the supporters of the old dynasty. He therefore followed a policy of moderation and treated the rebels with exemplary kindness.²⁴ But from the cruelty displayed by the Sultan in punishing Sidi Maula it is quite evident that his moderation was not the outcome of a natural pity.²⁵ Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Khalji, in spite of his professed dislike to shed Muslim blood²⁶, never spared those whom he considered to be thorns in his path. He had on a previous occasion shown his unscrupulous mind by killing Mu'izz'd-Din Kaiqubad and removing the boy-Sultan Shamsu'd-Din from the throne.²⁷ But his weakness as an usurper prevented him from taking strong measure against all acts of rebellion. His policy of moderation to conspirators²⁸, as also his reverence for Sultan Balban, however did not appeal to the younger section of the Khaljis.²⁹ This dissatisfaction grew apace as the Sultan demonstrated lack of determination in his expeditions.³⁰ The murder of the Sultan, although executed by his ambitious nephew 'Alau'd-Din, was an event which came as a result of the failure of the Sultan to satisfy his own militant followers.

Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji, who ascended the throne in 1296, disliked the manifestation in the Maliks and Amirs of the very same qualities which had helped him to win the crown.³¹ He adopted a stern policy to crush the turbulence of his grandees. But in spite of his precaution, the Sultan could not prevent the adventurous among the Khaljis to try to imitate him. Akar Khan, a nephew of the Sultan, nearly killed him at Tilpat while the Sultan was on his march to the fort of Ranthambhor in 1301.³² Another unsuccessful revolt was led by 'Umar Khan and Manghu Khan, the sister's son of the Sultan.³³

The above incidents and such others³⁴ convinced the Sultan about the need for drastic measures to be taken against the Amirs and Maliks. After much deliberation he came to the conclusion that the ignorance of the Sultan about the condition of his subjects, wine imbibing, social association among the Maliks and Amirs and increase of wealth among them contributed to rebellion.³⁵ The Sultan tried to remove all these causes of rebellion, enforced prohibition, and strictly forbade social intercourse among the nobles. The sellers, importers and drinkers of wine were subjected to corporal punishments and sent to prison.³⁶ His *Munhiyans* or spies created terror in every body's heart. No one could stir without the knowledge of the Sultan, and whatever happened in the houses of the Amirs and Maliks were reported to the Sultan by his spies. The system was so perfect that no one dared speak loudly in the palace of *Hazar sutun*, and the Amirs and Maliks communicated with each other by signs.³⁷ The Sultan also gave command that the Maliks and Amirs should not visit each others' house or give feasts or hold meetings. They could not communicate with each other and even in sarais they were not allowed to sit together.³⁸ Thus the Turkish nobles were reduced to the position of dignified slaves. The aim of the Sultan to crush the power of the Maliks was eminently successful, but it paved the path for individual adventurers like Malik Kafur. Moreover, the Indian faction of the court which so long could not gather sufficient strength now asserted itself.

III

Growth of the Indian Faction

Though the power of the Turkish Amirs was crushed to a great extent by Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji, yet Turkish chauvinism had given way to a dominance by only another set of Amirs and Maliks of foreign extraction. An altogether new element in the population was gradually coming to the forefront, and rivalling the power of the Turkish Amirs and foreign-born aristocracy. This community comprised of the Muslim converts in India. Some of them gradually gained influence in the court circle. The highbrow attitude of the Turkish and foreign Amirs and Maliks made the Indian faction antagonistic to that group.

The hatred of the Turks towards the Indians is quite evident from Minhajū'd-Din's vilification of Malik 'Imadū'd-Din Raihan who had temporarily ousted Balban from favour in the reign of Sultan Nasirū'd-Din Mahamud.³⁹ It was a great diplomatic triumph for Raihan to have ousted from power the brilliant and capable leader of the Turkish faction, even for a brief interval. The time and the situation however was disadvantageous for Malik 'Imadū'd-Din because the Turks were the real kingmakers during the reign of the sons of Sultan Shamsū'd-Din Iltutmish.⁴⁰ Moreover, this event took place in the early period of the Turkish rule in India, when the vanity of the conqueror despised all those who belonged to the conquered territory irrespective of their religious faith. To have grabbed power at that time, in spite of an initial disadvantage of belonging to the community of the converted Muslim, proves not only the political ability of Raihan but also indicates the existence of a nascent Indian faction. Minhajū'd-Din, the historian and an admirer of Balban, actually alludes to it by way of vilifying Raihan. He asserts that for a period of six months or even longer it was out of his power to leave his dwelling or to go to Friday prayer for fear of the violence of the gang of villains who were patronised by 'Imadū'd-Din Raihan.⁴¹ Eventually the pride of race asserted itself, and the Amirs belonging to the Turkish race united to overthrow Raihan who 'came of the tribe of Hind'.⁴² This event however left permanent impression on Balban who was now careful to verify a man's family history before granting him any favour.⁴³ This attitude was the outcome of a deliberate policy of excluding all the Indians from⁴⁴ power and position.

The rise of the Khaljis was not however hailed by the Indian faction because we find that Malik Chhaju, the nephew of Balban, received support from all over the country.⁴⁵ While describing the battle in which Malik Chhaju and his followers were defeated, the court historian Barani expressed his dislike of the Indian and stated that "the spiritless rice-eating Hindustanis made a great noise but lost all their powers; and the valiant soldiers of the royal army drew their sword and rushed upon them. Malik Chhaju and his nobles and all the Hindustanis took to flight and dispersed".⁴⁶ But when after the demise of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji, Malik Kafur, the favourite slave of the late Sultan, usurped all the power of the state, none could stand in his way, because the ruthless policy of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din had crippled the power

of the Turkish Amirs. The career of Malik Kafur⁴⁷ was however cut short by four *paiks* who killed him in his chamber, and thus helped Sultan Qutbu'd-Din Mubarak Khalji, a son of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji, to escape from prison and death and ascend the throne.⁴⁸

The policy of Sultan Mubarak Khalji weakened the foundation of his own rule, and paved the way for an opportunist to seize power. Though in the initial stage he had earned popularity by releasing the prisoners, and relaxing the stringent regulations of his father⁴⁹, the Sultan soon lost it through inadvertance and cruelty. He insulted high officers of the state like 'Ainu'l-Mulk Multani and Malik Qarabeg, and showed disrespect to Shaikh Nizamud-Din Auliya, the most venerated saint of the age. He foolishly devoted himself to pleasure-seeking, openly gave up *namaz*, and did not observe the fast of Ramazan.⁵⁰ With the example of Malik Kafur before him he blindly patronised Khusraw Khan, a slave-convert from Gujrat, and closed his eyes to the designs of this favourite slave.⁵¹ As a natural result of his policy, Khusraw Khan who was long awaiting his opportunity murdered the Sultan with the help of his countrymen and assumed the crown.

Malik Kafur was a lone figure, but Khusraw Khan who assumed the title of Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Khusraw Shah had behind him a brave band of followers.⁵² The accession of Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Khusraw Shah on the throne of Delhi was a unique feature, because, for the first time after the Turkish conquest of India, a native of the soil assumed royal power and dignity. The ability of Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Khusraw Shah in winning over the great officers of the state who had served in the previous reign is also praiseworthy. Even Fakhru'd-Din Jun, who later on became Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, was given the post of Akhurbeg.⁵³ The accusation levelled against him about idolatry is untenable when we find that among provincial governors whom Ghazi Malik, the Warden of North West Frontier, approached for help in a holy war against the usurper only Bahram Aibah responded readily.⁵⁴ Had Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Khusraw Shah been a reviver of Hinduism, Ghazi Malik would have received unflinching support from all. But, as most of the Maliks and Amirs did not see eye to eye with the Ghazi who had declared a holy war against the Sultan, the allegation of an attempted revival of Hinduism by Khusraw Khan falls to the ground. Moreover, it remains that within a short period the Sultan was able to

establish his authority in different parts of his empire. The *jihād* of Ghazi Malik was not actually a holy war for saving Islam from the hands of paganism⁵⁵, it actually demonstrates the hatred of the Amira claiming foreign descent⁵⁶ towards the native-born. It is significant that though a holy war was declared against Sultan Nasirū'd-Din Khusraw Shah and though he had committed untold atrocities on the 'Ala'i family yet there was no spontaneous reaction against his rule in Delhi in favour of the old royal house, as had taken place in the case of Khalji usurpation.

It is also significant that before assuming the crown formally Ghiyasū'd-Din Tughluq was assailed by the same hesitation from which Sultan Jalalū'd-Din Khalji had suffered. But whereas the latter had displaced a long-established dynasty, the former had overthrown an upstart. Yet he had to deliver a long harangue before the assembled Malikis and Amirs in justification of his acts.⁵⁷ He offered to pay homage to any surviving member of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din's family. But as none could be traced, and as the assembled Malikis and Amirs refused to select any one else, he ascended the throne.⁵⁸ It is strange that in spite of his victory over Sultan Nasirū'd-Din Khusraw Shah, the founder of the Tughluq dynasty showed so much hesitation to assume the crown. The old officers of the state were also offered suitable employment.⁵⁹ Probably Sultan Ghiyasū'd-Din Tughluq was desirous of gaining the support of every one in favour of the new dynasty, after he had snatched power from the hands of the Indian faction.

During the reign of his son Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq by slow and gradual process the Indian faction again asserted itself in the court-circle. They gained an advantage under Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq who appointed them to responsible posts. The jealousy of the foreign Amirs towards the natives of the soil became very apparent during the revolt of 'Ainu'l-Mulk Multani, the governor of Awadh and Zafarabad. The Sultan at that time was staying at Sargadawari.⁶⁰ Ibn Battuta informs us that considering the serious character of the revolt the Sultan had a plan of going back to the capital for collecting more forces, but the foreign Amirs who were much alarmed persuaded him to take immediate action because 'Ainu'l-Mulk was a native Amir of whom the foreigners were jealous.⁶¹ 'Ainu'l-Mulk was defeated by the royal army but the Sultan granted him pardon.⁶² The indulgence shown by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq towards

'Ainu'l-Mulk was quite in contrast to his stern attitude towards other rebellions.

Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq also gave much offence to the foreign Amirs by his policy of taking drastic steps against old officers of the state, some of whom were dismissed by him on charges of embezzlement.⁶³ He appointed⁶⁴ 'Aziz Himar as a governor of Dhar and Malwa with special instructions to suppress the Amirs of the centuries.⁶⁵ This and such other appointments of men, who in the eyes of the aristocrats of blue blood did not belong to their rank, to high posts⁶⁶ further aggrieved them. Contemporary chroniclers brand these Indian Muslims who had worked their way up in the court as low-born and mean. Barani expressed amazement at the promotion and honour of those persons who were in his eyes unworthy of such honour.⁶⁷ In reality however the Sultan who disliked the *Amiran-i-Sadah*⁶⁸ and their propensity to create trouble encouraged the Indian faction perhaps as a counterpoise to the foreign Amirs. The foreign Amirs and their advocates on the other hand disliked the growth of the influence of the native-born in the court circle and vilified these native Amirs as unworthy persons.

Shamsi Siraj Afif, the historian of the Sultan Firuz Shah's reign, has however highly praised the ability of Malik Maqbul, one among these native-born Amirs who received promotion during Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign. He was a converted native of Telingana and was given the title of Khan-i-Jahan. He was promoted to the office of deputy Wazir⁶⁹ by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq. According to Afif "although he had no knowledge of reading and writing he was a man of great common sense, acumen and intelligence and was an ornament of the court". About 'Ainu'l-Mulk also Afif writes that he was a clever and accomplished man of the highest ability.⁷⁰ Some among those who were promoted by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq might have proved unworthy but even in their case it is very doubtful whether they were as worthless as Barani would have us believe. Race-superiority and jealousy of the Indian faction and their growth of influence blinded the contemporary historian to their good qualities.

Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq who was elected unanimously⁷¹ at Thatta in Sind, where his cousin Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq breathed his last, revived the practice of granting villages upon officers. Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban had wanted to abolish this practice⁷² and Sultan 'Alau'd-Din

Khalji had actually abolished it.⁷³ But Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq not only revived the system; he also allowed the grantees to bequeath their property to their sons and grandsons.⁷⁴ As a result of this policy of the Sultan the centrifugal forces gained strength and from the later days of Firuz Shah's rule there was growth or anarchy and chaos in the state.

So long however as the Sultan was in the vigour of his life, peace and order was maintained in the kingdom. The Indian faction continued to be in favour during his rule and the post of Wazir was entrusted to Qawam'ul-Mulk Malik Maqbul who succeeded to the position and title of his father, Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul.⁷⁵ According to Yahya, in the later days of Sultan Firuz Shah's rule "Khan-i-Jahan, his Wazir, held the reins (of the state) and brought under his sway the affairs of the state. The Firuz Shahi Amirs and Maliks were entirely subservient to him, and those who opposed him were removed from the presence of the Sultan by all possible means; some were killed and others confined".⁷⁶ And for this the affairs of the state became slow moving and some loss occurred daily. But that Khan-i-Jahan was quite a competent and able administrator is evident from the fact that, as soon as he was removed from power through the influence of Prince Muhammad Khan⁷⁷, the kingdom fell into disorder and the Firuz Shahi slaves stirred insurrection against the prince who had to fly for life.

The Indian-born Amirs and Maliks, from 'Imadu'd-Din Raihan to Khan-i-Jahan (senior and junior), had shown much ability in statesmanship and administration. They suffered from a great many disadvantages. They were looked down upon by the blue-blooded aristocrats whose ancestors had come from beyond the frontiers. The reputation of many of them has suffered in the hands of contemporary writers, because the Indian faction in the court was a serious rival to the foreign-origin Amirs, specially from the days when due to the policy of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji the Turco-Slave junta had lost its old power and position.

IV

Conclusion

The aristocracy formed an integral part of the mediaeval political set-up. Most of the Maliks and Amirs in the early

days of the Sultanate were recruited from favourite slaves and in the later days too slavery was a source of recruitment for high offices of the state. Slaves of the later days however lacked racial cohesion, because they were recruited from different parts of the country and from different races.⁷⁸ But from the very start by forming an inner ring of favoured few the system proved a drag on mediaeval polity.⁷⁹ From the famous 'Forty slaves' of Sultan Ilutmish down to the Firuz Shahi slaves, the system helped the growth of despotism when the ruler was strong, and anarchy when the ruler was weak.

In addition, the aristocracy was riddled with racial and factional interest. The race chauvinism of the Turks and the high-brow attitude of the foreign-origin Amirs and Malikhs led to wrangling in the court circle for the distribution of office and power. The gradual though slow growth of the Indian faction was a natural outcome of the superiority exhibited by the aristocracy of foreign descent. Apart from personal jealousy and ambition, this racial and factional quarrel among the aristocrats kept them divided in action. But there was at least one striking feature of likeness and similarity among all the members of mediaeval aristocracy, i.e., their interest in maintaining their privileged position and power as a ruling class.

The power of the Amirs and Malikhs used to grow invariably whenever the Sultan was weak and feeble. Under a strong ruler like Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban they were of course held in check. But whenever a weak monarch ruled they used to become the real power behind the throne. For instance, during the rule of the sons of Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Ilutmish and successors of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq⁸⁰, the rulers were puppets in the hands of the Amirs and Malikhs. The common people perhaps suffered even more during the period of their preponderance than at times when they were held in check by powerful Sultans. Therefore instances of resistance to the oppression by the aristocracy or helping the Sultan against them are not lacking in mediaeval history.

NOTES

1. According to the author of the *Ta'rikh-i-Fakhru'd-Din Mubarak Shahi*, the Turks "while they remain among their own people and in their own country, are merely a tribe among other tribes, and enjoy no

particular power or status the more remote they are from their own homes and relatives the more highly are they esteemed and appreciated, they become Amirs and generalissimos". Sir Denison Ross (edited by), *Ta'rikh-i-Fakhru'd-Din Mubarak Shahi*, pp. 36-37.

2. The fort of Gwalior was expressly left by Mu'izzu'd-Din Muhammad bin Sam to Malik Bahau'd-Din Tughril to take, but the besieged of the Gwalior fort offered submission to Malik (Malik at that period) Qutbu'd-Din Aibak, who occupied it. Consequently this gave offence to Bahau'd-Din, but his sudden death prevented a quarrel between him and Qutbu'd-Din. *T-i-N*, p. 145; Raverty, pp. 545-46.
3. According to Major Raverty the very fact that Qutbu'd-Din Aibak, Nasiru'd-Din Qubachah, Bahau'd-Din Tughril and Ikhtiyaru'd-Din Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji have been numbered consecutively in the *T-i-N* shows that the latter were not officers of Qutbu'd-Din but were only politically dependent on him as the Sultan's representative at Delhi. Raverty, p. 549 f.n. 4.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 528, 530.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 606.
6. The former was defeated in battle and imprisoned in 612/A.H. 1216 A.D. and the latter was drowned in the river Sind while trying to escape after his defeat at the hands of the Sultan Iltutmish in 625 A.H./1228 A.D. E and D, Vol. II, pp. 201-02, 239, 240-42.
7. The successive Sultans who came to the throne during this brief period were : (1) Sultan Ruknu'd-Din, Firuz, 1236; (2) Sultan Razia (1236-40); (3) Mu'izzu'd-Din Bahram Shah (1240-42); (4) 'Alau'd-Din Ma'sud Shah (1242-46). Of these the first three were the progenies of Sultan Iltutmish and the last the son of Sultan Ruknu'd-Din.
8. *Chronicle*, p. 181; the *Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi*, pp. 54, 59. The last date on Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Mahmud's coin is 664 A.H. and the same date is observed in the earliest coin of Balban. See also the *Struggle for Empires* (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Vol. V), p. 160, f.n. 44 for discussion of the date.
9. Barani, p. 28.
10. But apparently this did not satisfy him because he joined hands with Qutlugh-Khan, the step-father of the Sultan. After the failure of this he joined with Mongols, *T-i-N*, pp. 197, 221-25.
11. Barani, p. 32.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
13. The Sultan flogged to death Malik Baq Baq, the fief-holder of Badaon, for killing one of his attendants; another Malik Haibat Khan narrowly escaped death for a similar offence by bribing the widow of the slave he had killed (Barani, pp. 40-41).
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65. See also Saran, *Studies in Mediaeval History*, pp. 242-43.
15. Barani, p. 122. Dr. R. S. Tripathi points out that the election of Kaiqubad while his father was yet alive proved that the Turks claimed the freedom to select any one from the family of a successful ruler,

heedless of any nomination ; *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* (Second Ed.), p. 39.

16. He ascended the throne in 686 A.H. and his rule for 3 years and a few months ended in 689 A.H. The coins of Shamsu'd-Din Kayumars, his son are also dated in 689 A.H. *Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi*, p. 66. For a detailed discussion see K. S. Lal, *History of the Khaljis*, p. 18, fn. 2 ; Hodivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, p. 264.
17. Barani, pp. 129-30 ; T-i-A, p. 104 Ferishta, Vol. I, p. 146.
18. Barani (pp. 198-39) says that Malik Nizamu'd-Din even aspired for the crown and his plan was known to all the people of Delhi. In a meeting between the Sultan and his father Bughra Khan, the latter had warned his son against the designs of Nizamu'd-Din and had asked his son to remove Nizamu'd-Din. Consequently after his return from this meeting the Sultan had Malik Nizamu'd-Din poisoned. For a description of this meeting see E and D (Vol. III), pp. 524-32.
19. Barani, p. 171.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 172.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 173.
22. According to Barani (pp. 175-76), the Khaljis belonged to another race. Nizamu'd-Din Ahmed in his T-i-A (p. 116) further elucidates the point and says that the Khaljis were descendants of Qulij Khan, son-in-law of Chingiz Khan. Qulij had migrated to Gaur and Jurjistan and his people came to be known as Qalji from Qulij. But Badaoni (Ranking, Vol. I, p. 230) says that this assertion has no real authority. Moreover, *Ta'rikh-i-Fakhru'd-Din Mubarak Shahi* (p. 23) placed the Khaljis among the Turkish race. Raverty has pointed out that the Khaljis inhabited Afghanistan and were considered more as Afghan than as Turks (Raverty, p. 549, fn. 3). It would be safe to conclude that the Khaljis were Turks but having long resided in Afghanistan they had assimilated the habits and customs of that country. See K. S. Lal, *History of the Khaljis*, pp. 11-15.
23. Barani, pp. 178-80.
24. The Sultan allowed Malik Chhaju, a nephew of Balban, and his followers to go scot free after the failure of their attempted rebellion. *Ibid.*, p. 184.
25. See Chapter II.
26. T-i-A, p. 121.
27. The paralytic body of Kaiqubad was thrown into the Jamuna river by Turkish, an assassin sent by Jalalu'd-Din Khalji. *Futu'uh's-salatîn* (Agra Ed.), p. 200 ; See also Barani, p. 178.
28. Another conspirator, Malik Taju'd-Din Kuchi, who openly declared his intention of killing the Sultan in a drunken orgy, was granted pardon. Barani, p. 190.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
30. For instance, his failure to take the fort of Ranthambhor. *Ibid.*, p. 218.
31. Most of the Malikis who had betrayed the cause of Sultan Jalalu'd-Din for love of gold were punished. Again the Sultan was jealous of the

- fame of Zafar Khan, one of his valiant commanders, and allowed him to be killed in a battle against Qutlugh Khwajali (1299). See *Futuh*, p. 258; *T-i-A*, p. 141.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 273-76; Badaoni (B.I.), p. 192.
 33. *T-i-A*, pp. 148-49.
 34. It was followed by the revolt of Haji Maula. For details see below.
 35. Barani, pp. 282-83.
 36. The condition of these prison houses were inhuman. According to Isami the prisoners here "laboured so much that they desired death as in the end of autumn the leaves drop down of their own accord". *Futuh*, p. 347. According to Barani holes were dug near Badaon Gate to keep prisoners and very few expected to escape death from this place (Barani, pp. 285-86).
 37. The Sultan confiscated villages held in proprietary right, in free gift or as religious endowment. *Ibid.*, pp. 285-84.
 38. *Ibid.*, pp. 286-87.
 39. Raverty, p. 826.
 40. See above.
 41. Raverty, p. 829.
 42. *Idem*; *T-i-N*, pp. 300-08.
 43. Barani, p. 29; *T-i-N*, p. 78.
 44. Balban never talked even to the low-born and discouraged writing letters to them. Barani, pp. 33, 34, 38.
 45. *Ibid.*, p. 182. According to Barani rawats and paiks all over the country rushed to the support of Malik Chhaju like ants and locusts.
 46. *Idem*.
 47. Kafur placed Shihabu'd-Din, a minor son of the late Sultan, on the throne and acted as his regent for 36 days. *Futuh*, p. 335.
 48. *Ibid.*, pp. 342-45. Muḥarak Khalji also acted as a regent for some time before assuming the crown formally. *Ferishta* (Bombay Ed.), Vol. I, p. 218.
 49. Barani, p. 383.
 50. He killed Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan, his own brothers and a host of other relatives. Khizr Khan was murdered for his refusal to part with Deval Rani. Zafar Khan, the Wali of Gujrat and his own father-in-law, was killed without any ostensible reason. There are many other such instances of his wanton cruelty. See *Ferishta* (Bombay Ed.), Vol. I, p. 221 and Barani, pp. 393, 395-96.
 51. Malik Talbagha and Malik Tamar who had exposed the designs of Khusraw Khan to the Sultan received punishment instead of reward. Barani, pp. 399-401.
 52. The identity of the tribe or caste to which he belonged is still uncertain. Barani gives it as Barwar (Barani, p. 390); Amir Khusraw calls them Barado (*Tughluqnama*, p. 19); Badaoni has Barwar (*Muntakhabu't-twarikh*, B.I., p. 212). Professor Hodivala has pointed out "the name is not written Parwari or even Parwar except by Nizamu'd-Din and his copyist Ferishta. Nizamu'd-Din was born and educated in Herat. He was not well acquainted with any Indian

vernacular and his opinion on a question relating to the intricate and obscure nomenclature of Hindu tribes and castes is of absolutely no value" (*Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, p. 370). Misguided by the word Parwar, Briggs and following him Thomas identified them with 'Dhed' or 'Mahar' defined as an individual of low caste (*Chronicle*, p. 184). Whatsoever might have been the origin of Khusrav Khan, it is difficult to accept this theory because Barani and Amir Khusrav speak highly of their bravery (*Ta'rikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, pp. 397-402; and *Tughluqnama*, p. 19). But, on the other hand, Bird (*History of Gujarat*, p. 167n) and Bayley (*Local Muhammadan Dynasties*, p. 41n) semitic script should not however be confused with mim and contrived to identify Parwar with Parmar Rajputs. The 'wa' of the semitic script should not however be confused with 'mim' and con-
I.H.Q., 1934 I.H.C., 1958.

53. *T.M.S.*, p. 88.
54. Ghazi Malik stirred rebellion in Multan against Amir Mughlatai who had refused to join him and had him killed. Muhammad Shah of Sivistan was imprisoned by those who wanted to support Ghazi Malik, and released only on condition that he would help the Tughluq cause. 'Alau'd-Din Multani frankly confessed that he would join the winning side, and Yeklakhi, the Amir of Samana, lost his life in his attempt to oppose Ghazi Malik. Amir 'Ali Alkhusus joined the Tughluq side after some vacillation. *T.M.S.*, pp. 88-90; *Tughluqnama* (Aurangabad Text), pp. 59-69.
55. Dr. R. P. Tripathi remarks that "the slogan of revenge for religion, so common yet so effective in the history of the Muslims was now started." *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* (Second Ed.), p. 56.
56. According to Ferishta (Bombay Ed.), Vol. I, p. 231, the father of Ghiyasud-Din Tughluq was a Turki slave of Sultan Balban. About the lineage of the Tughluq ruler Dr. Husain remarks that "if the Tughluq or his father came to settle in India under Balban, and afterwards rose to prominence as Ferishta informs us, he should be a Turk rather than a Mongol, since Balban hated the Mongols, and welcomed Turks. Making a compromise between the different account of Ibn Battuta and Badr Chach regarding Sultan Muhammad's descent one feels constrained to conclude that he was certainly a Turk as his father's name 'Tughluq'—a Turki word—indicates but he was not identical with the Qaraunas, being a lineal descendant of the Sassanian Kings of Persia". A. M. Husain, *Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq*, p. 51.
57. *Tughluqnama* (Aurangabad Text), pp. 140-41. See Chapter V.
58. Barani, pp. 421-22.
59. *T.M.S.*, p. 93.
60. Barani, p. 485. The name Sargadawari was given to the place in Farrukhabad district, on the banks of the Ganges, where the Sultan had encamped with his army. *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, pp. 296-97.

61. *Rehla*, pp. 105-07. Ishwari Prasad, *History of the Qaraunah Turks*, Vol. 1, p. 168.
62. Barani, p. 491.
63. *T-i-A*, p. 214.
64. Barani calls him Himar, but others including Nizamu'd-Din Ahmad (*T-i-A*, p. 215) and Badaoni (B.I. Text), p. 235, calls him Khammar. The former word can be taken to mean ass and the latter as wine-seller. *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, p. 298.
65. Barani, p. 508. The term literally translates the "amirs of hundreds or Yuzbashi who were not, however, purely military officers, but revenue officials responsible for collection of taxes in groups of about a hundred villages each, who were entitled to a commission of five per cent on their collections". *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 166, fn. 2.
66. For instance men like Firuz the barber and Manka the tobacco-seller were placed in high position and Shaikh Babu Naik, the son of a weaver, was honoured by being placed in the proximity of the Sultan. Barani, p. 505.
67. *Ibid.*, pp. 506-07.
68. The Amir-i-Sadah of Deogir, Gujrat and other places broke out in rebellion. In Gujrat they helped the rebellion of Tughli, a former slave of the Sultan; in Deogir they set up an independent kingdom under 'Alau'd-Din Hasan Shah. Barani, pp. 514-21, 523; *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXVIII, for the history of the Bahmani dynasty.
69. *Asf*, pp. 394, 422. He became Wazir in the reign of Sultan Firuz Tughluq and died at a ripe old age.
70. *Idem*. Asif also records a quarrel between 'Alau'l-Mulk and Khan-i-Jahan which ended happily for the generosity of the former.
71. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45. Khudawanda-Zada, the daughter of Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq, had pleaded the claim of her son, but was told on her face that her son was incompetent to rule.
72. He had ordered the confiscation of the property of 2000 Shamsi horse-men in Doab but owing to the request of Kotwal Malik Fakhr'u'd-Din revoked his order. Barani, p. 64.
73. See above.
74. *Asf*, p. 96.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 425-26.
76. *T.M.S.*, p. 135-36.
77. *Ibid.*, pp. 137-39.
78. *Asf*, pp. 368-71.
79. Some authors go to the length of asserting that it was the deterioration in the quality of slaves that contributed to the fall of the Sultanate (*Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq*, p. 25). But it would be more correct to state that slavery itself contributed to a great extent to the fall of the Sultanate, by hampering the growth of a healthy State-structure.
80. *T.M.S.*, p. 160. Prior to Timur's inroad the country was rent by anarchy and civil war among contending Amirs who posed themselves as partisans of two grandsons of Sultan Firuz, viz., Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Mahmud Shah and Sultan Nusrat Shah.

PART II

CHAPTER III

DELHI UNDER THE ILBARI TURKS

I

Delhi and its People

The capital city of Delhi held an unique position in the middle ages, not only in Hindustan, but in the whole Muslim world. It became the resort of the Muslim refugees from Central Asia, Khiya, Bukhara and finally Baghdad which fell like ninepins before the Mongol invaders.¹ The Turkish conquest of Delhi had brought about a new turn in the life of the city. The population of the city increased rapidly resulting in the expansion of the city under practically each successive ruler.² Thus Delhi comprised of several cities and it was forty miles in circumference.³ The city had ramparts which according to Ibn Battuta were unparalleled in those days. The rampart was 11 cubits in breadth containing store houses, guard room, towers, siege machines and several gates.

The congregational Mosque of Delhi was of great extent ; its walls, its roofs and its pavements were all of white stone and the pieces were very artistically cemented together by means of lead. There were thirteen pavilions and four court yards. The Muizzi College of Delhi had also a large building, and it was mistaken by the followers of the Qaramitah and Mulahidah heretics to be the Jami' Mosque.⁴ The houses of Delhi according to Shaikh Mubarak were built of stone and bricks and the roofs of the houses were of wood. The floors were paved with stones like marble. None of the houses were more than two stories high. But Shaikh Abu Bakar bin Khallal improves upon his statement when he informs Shihabu'd-Din Abu'l 'Abbas Ahmad that "this description applies only to the old houses of Delhi, for the new ones are built differently".⁵ The royal palaces, like the White Palace and the Red Palace of Sultan Balban, were built on a far more magnificent scale. But the poorer people as now lived under thatched roofs. Delhi had seventy hospitals which were called *Daru'sh-shifa* or houses of cure. The number of colleges in Delhi amounted up to one thousand, of which one belonged

to the Shafais', and the rest to the Hanafis. The number of chapels and hermitages were nearly 2,000.⁸ Delhi also contained many *Khanqahs* founded by saints. Sidi Maula, a darvesh from the north, laid the foundation of a *Khanqah* which attracted travellers by land and by sea, who stopped in it.⁹ Such *Khanqahs* had many hangers-on and their charity provided for many of the poor and the needy.

The patronage of the Sultans to men of arts and letters turned Delhi into a cultural centre. This patronage was not the monopoly of the Sultans alone, because the Amirs and Malikis and the princes of the royal house also extended their munificence to poets, writers, saints as also to the poor and needy.⁶ Prince Muhammad, the eldest son of Sultan Balban, was the patron of the poets Amir Khusraw and Hasan. A similar society of cultured men was created by Bughra Khan, the second son of Sultan Balban.⁶ That private munificence was a great incentive to the efflorescence of the cultural life in the middle ages can be inferred from the fact that during Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji's reign Delhi had become the object of envy of other cities, due to the assemblage of men versed in various sciences and great religious teachers though the Sultan himself had no interest in learning.¹⁰ Historians, physicians and men versed in different branches of various sciences¹¹ had made the metropolis one of the chief centres of culture in the east. Poet Amir Khusraw while eulogising Delhi said, "Hazrat-i-Dihli is the seat of faith and justice, and, is the Eden of Heaven."¹² Sultan Firuz Tughluq was a great patron of the letters and spent 136 lakhs of *tankas* in gifts and pension of which 86 lakhs were spent for the religious and learned.¹³ Delhi had become a cultural centre and developed a language peculiar to its own.¹⁴ The court and the aristocracy attracted slave traders to sell their human merchandise, specially women accomplished in dance and music and fine arts, to cater to the needs of the pleasure-loving Sultans and Amirs.¹⁵ A special type of devotional music was developed by the Muslim saints and their devotees.¹⁶

The city was a great trade centre and merchants and caravans from various parts of the empire came to the capital. The markets of the city hummed with brisk activities. The city had different markets for cloth, slaves, corn and various other goods.¹⁷ Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji appointed a controller of the markets (*Shahna-i-Mandi*), to look after prices and enforce his regulations.¹⁷ The shop-keepers of the city were accustomed to give short weight and Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji

had to keep himself constantly informed directly through his pages in order to see that they do not practise fraudulent measure.¹⁸ The city had brokers and smugglers who smuggled country-made wine into the city, after Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji had prohibited its manufacture. The main reason that baffled the introduction of the token coins by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq was his failure to control those who counterfeited the coins.¹⁹ Moreover, the *karkhanas* manufactured various types of articles and employed slave workers. These royal *karkhanas* were 36 in number and contributed much to the development of the economic life of the city.²⁰ The day labourers, the palanquin bearers, porters²¹ and the unemployed formed a large section of the city's population. Sultan 'Alau'd-Din once faced the rebellion of the neo-Muslims because they had no employment and failed to get any even after their appeal to the Sultan.²² Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq and Sultan Firuz Tughluq also tried in their own way to solve the unemployment problem though it is not possible to gauge the success or failure of their laudable attempts.²³

In Delhi, the rich, the aristocracy, the Amirs and Maliks led a life of ease and luxury.²⁴ The life of the urban plebeians, on the other hand, was in no way better than that of the tillers of the soil and conversion to Islamic faith did not in any way improve their condition. We hear of the charity of great Maliks and Amirs who according to Barani vied with one another in performing charitable acts.²⁵ Those who were in need of charity were countless in number, because of the unemployment problem of the urban masses. Whereas rich Amirs and Maliks basked in the sunshine of luxury and pleasure and drew large incomes from their fiefs and from the State, the poor lived as so often a hand-to-mouth existence. Great Amirs like Kotwal Fakhru'd-Din did not use a dress for more than one day²⁶; the poor weaver worked hard for a few *jitals*. The rich among the Hindus used to ride horses and lived a life of pleasure; the poor including Muslims begged for bread at their doors. There was popularisation of wealth, and society was sharply divided into the usual poor many and the rich few.²⁷ The poorer classes, Hindus and Muslim alike, led a simple life and the rich few enjoyed all the amenities that society could provide.

Life of the city plebeians was not very different in those days from what we find today. Afif informs us that public carriages would run five *kos* for four silver *jitals*; the palanquin

bearers walked the same distance for half a *tanka*; the fare of a mule was 6 *jitals*, and of a horse twelve. The porters (Muzduran) filled the streets for lack of any other employment, and though the same author asserts that they earned a good livelihood²⁸ yet perhaps no body would exchange their occupation with them. A simple calculation shows that they actually led a hand-to-mouth existence in times of plenty and starved during periods of scarcity. For instance, a palanquin needed at least four men, and it is evident that four porters used to earn half *tanka* by undertaking a single trip of five *kos*. According to Mr. H. Nelson Wright, one *tanka* in those days was equivalent to 48 *jitals*. He says: "At the end of the Seventh Century we have Firishta's authority for the proportion that the *tankah* was equivalent to 50 *jitals*. There had been no material alteration in the coinage by that date since the time of Iltutmish. It may then be reasonably suggested, if the coins themselves support the suggestion—as they do—that the *tankah* of Iltutmish was equivalent to the same number of *jitals* as that of 'Alau'd-Din. Assuming, however a *tankah* of 96 *ratls*, and taking the ascertained silver content of the billion coins, an equation of 48 *jitals* to the *tankah* would be more in keeping with probabilities than one of 50 *jitals*."²⁹

Four palanquin bearers could earn therefore 24 *jitals* by carrying passengers to a distance of 5 *kos*, and per head income for each bearer after covering 5 *kos* is 6 *jitals*. Therefore one palanquin bearer could earn 1.1/5th of a *jital* after covering 1 *kos*. And due to the existence of competition between different kinds of transport, and the existence of 'plenty of porters ready for employment', a porter could not have earned more than the palanquin bearer. We can assume reasonably that as physically it was not possible for any palanquin bearer to undertake any other work after carrying a load for 5 *kos*, the maximum that he could expect to earn in a day was 6 *jitals*. In an ordinary family consisting of father, mother and two children, per head income would come to less than one *tanka* per month or less than four *tankas* a family per month. Under normal condition such an income was sufficient to assure only a bare livelihood.³⁰ But at times of famine, and during periods of rising prices it did not perhaps meet the expenses of even two meals per day. Moreover, because of the existence of unemployment and hard competition with slave labour there was no certainty of regular income.

Delhi being a large city and centre of trade and commerce had developed an under-world, characteristic of all metropolitan

cities. The dishonest trader, the riff-raff of the town³¹, the smugglers and the regular visitors of disreputable taverns formed this under-world. Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji attempted to strike at the root of corruption by controlling and punishing these refractory elements of the city. The tavern-goers' reaction to police harassment for enforcing Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji's law for prohibition of wine has been aptly expressed in the following couplet of *Muntakhabu't-tawarikh*³² "Now he sprinkles the flagon with salt, now he shatters the cup. How the policeman disturbs the peace of the tavern in which he sup." To the same Sultan also belongs the credit of attempting to check prostitution in the city. Perhaps he closed down the brothels along with gambling houses and taverns.³³

The importance of Delhi in the political life of the country cannot be over-estimated. The possession of Delhi gave one prior claim to rule the whole of Hindustan. Bughra Khan, the second son of Sultan Balban, lost the crown of Hindustan because he had chosen to stay at Lakhnawati, and left Hazat-i-Dihli, for that was the name by which the city has been often designated, prior to the demise of his father.³⁴ Malika-i-Jahan, the widowed Queen of Sultan Jalalu'd-Din, placed Qadr Khan, a young son of the late Sultan, on the throne of Delhi as soon as the news of the demise of her husband reached her ears, in preference to Arkali Khan, eldest among her surviving progenies, because he was away at Multan. She could not allow the throne to go vacant, and thus lose the allegiance of Delhi in the struggle against 'Alau'd-Din Khalji, the nephew and murderer of the late Sultan.³⁵ Delhi was the key to the sovereignty of the empire.

II

Plebeians in Thirteenth Century Metropolitan Politics

The city of Delhi was regarded as "the source of wealth and fountain of blessedness" from the very beginning of the Turkish rule in India.³⁶ According to Chand Bardai, the last of the Chauhan rulers of Delhi was so steeped in sensuality that the merchants of Delhi had to take the initiative to rouse him from stupor just before the second battle of Tarain in 1192.³⁷ The story is too romantic to be believed, more so because the king Prithvira] during this period had taken up his abode at

Ajmer.³⁹ But though the incident mentioned by Chand might have been the outcome of a flight of poetic imagination, yet it may be taken as a symbolic sketch drawn by the poet about the consciousness of the people of Delhi and their anxiety to protect their hearth and home from the north western cloud of invasion that gathered in the horizon.⁴⁰ The citizens of Delhi, it appears, were proud of the beauty of the city; "other towns are infested with thieves, have tyrannical rulers, are dependent on rain, have famine and poor"⁴¹, but Delhi according to the author of *Prithviraj vijaya* was free from all these troubles. It was but natural for them to become anxious for the security and safety of the city that they loved so much.

As soon as the Turkish conquerors turned themselves into empire builders, they had to take into consideration the interest of their subjects, and, in spite of their zeal for religion, they learnt through experience that statesmanship demanded conciliation. Qutbu'd-Din Aibak had gathered this lesson at Ghazna where at his own expense he had come to realise what the love of the populace meant to a ruler.⁴² Sultan Qutbu'd-Din tried to please the people by his liberality and justice and earned for himself the epitaph of *Hatimta'i in justice*.⁴³ After his demise in 1210, his son Aram Shah was raised to the throne. According to Minhaj "when Sultan Kutbu'd-Din Aibak died, the Amirs and Maliks of Hindustan at once considered it advisable for the sake of restraining tumult, for the tranquillity of the commonalty, and the contents of the hearts of the soldiery, to place Aram Shah on the throne"⁴⁴ Aram Shah seems to have failed completely to carry out this expectation and to gain the confidence of the people in general although a section of the Qutbi Amirs had taken up arms in his favour.⁴⁵

Aram Shah was replaced on the throne of Delhi by his brother-in-law, Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Iltutmish, who was originally a slave of the Ilbari Turkish stock⁴⁶, and had in the past obtained his manumission from slavery (*Kharr-i-Itaq*) due to the bravery shown by him in the battle against the Khokhars. But before he could be recognised as the ruler of the country he had to satisfy the jurists about his free status by showing them the order of manumission. According to Ibn Battuta "he made the people take oath of allegiance to him". But the jurists together with the chief justice refused to take the oath of allegiance before the charter of manumission was shown to them.⁴⁷

Sultan Shamsu'd-Din earned for himself a reputation for his justice, liberality and munificence, and according to the

author of the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* his liberality⁴⁷ attracted various people including traders, peasants and religious men to come to Delhi. Delhi became the centre of attraction for people far and near. The city attained the status not only of *Daru'l-Mulk* of Hindustan but also as one of the most important metropolitan cities in the Islamic world. More so because of the inroad of Mongols who had carried sword and fire into Asia and destroyed important centres of Muslim culture.

From the death of Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Iltutmish till the days when Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban held the helm of the state the Sultans were more or less puppets in the hands of the court factions. In the words of Barani "due to the inability of the sons of Shamsu'd-Din, and the dominance of the Shamsi slave the Kingdom was without any ruler and every body had become his own master".⁴⁸

Although the late Sultan had made a proclamation in favour of his daughter Razia,⁴⁹ yet perhaps in the last years of his life he had vacillated in his decision and called his son Ruknu'd-Din Firuz from Lahore to Delhi, and the historian Minhaj-u'd-Din says that the reason for this was that "the people had their eyes on him" (*Khalag az nazr barwai bud; T-i-N*, p. 162) because among the surviving sons of the Sultan he was the eldest. It is not possible to ascertain who these people were, but with the help of the aristocracy he ascended the throne (683 A.H./1235 A.D.) and ruled for six months and twenty days.⁵⁰

Sultan Ruknu'd-Din was generous but pleasure loving; and the administration of the state was left in the hands of his mother Shah Turkan, a Turkish woman⁵¹ who tried to wreak vengeance on all the other wives of Sultan Shamsu'd-Din.⁵² She cruelly blinded Qutbu'd-Din, a younger son of the late Sultan⁵³, and her acts caused discontent among the Maliks. Some of them like 'Aizzu'd-Din Muhammad Salari, the Muqti' of Badaon, and Malik Ayazu'd-Din Kabir Khan of Multan, together with the Muqti's of Hansi and Lahore revolted against him. Even his own wazir Nizamu'l-Mulk Muhammad Junaidi as his subsequent act showed had liason with them. The Sultan took out an expedition against them but returned to the capital when he received the news of a revolt at Delhi.⁵⁴ The generosity of the Sultan⁵⁵ perhaps had kept the people of the capital in check so long, but during his absence from the capital Shah Turkan the Queen mother quarrelled with Razia in whose favour a rebellion broke out in the city. The Sultan was forced to return to the capital. But the situation was

already out of control, because in response to an appeal from Razia whom Shah Turkan had attempted to capture and put to death, the people of Delhi rose and attacked the palace and imprisoned Shah Turkan. According to Ibn Battuta Razia wore the garment of the oppressed and appealed to the army (*an-nas*).⁵⁶ But most of the soldiers including the Turkish guards were absent from the capital and the appeal of Razia must have been to the people of Delhi.⁵⁷ The people of the city hearing of a conspiracy of the Queen mother against Razia rose up in rebellion, attacked the royal palace and seized Shah Turkan.

The Sultan retired to Kilughari and the revolt of the people was crowned with success. The Amirs and the soldiers, when they came back to the city, had to accept a *fait accompli* and took their oath of allegiance to Sultan Razia. Ruknu'd-Din was arrested from Kilughari and imprisoned. He died on 28th of *Rabi'ul awwal*, 634 A.H. (November, 1236 A.D.). The decision to deprive Ruknu'd-Din and install Razia in his place was apparently taken by the civilian population of Delhi and the army which was away from Delhi as also the Amirs who had accompanied the Sultan or the provincial governors who had raised the standard of revolt had little to do in the change-over that took place under the leadership and initiative of Razia and her supporters at Delhi.

The change was not at first opposed by the Amirs or provincial governors because discontent against Ruknu'd-Din was wide spread. But they disliked that they should lose their monopoly of acting as the arbiter in the politics of the empire. Therefore some of them refused to take the oath of allegiance to the new Sultan and encamped before the gates of the city. Only a section of the Amirs and soldiers who had accompanied Ruknu'd-Din to the capital in his hasty return journey took the oath of allegiance to Razia.⁵⁸ It took all the skill in the diplomacy of Sultan Razia to crush those nobles among whom she had sown seeds of dissension and thus succeeded in weakening their power of opposition.⁵⁹

Sultan Razia however did not receive support from all sections of the people, because among the events of remarkable importance in the beginning of her reign, Minhaju'd-Din mentions an uprising of Qaramitah and Mulahidah sects of Hindustan led by Nur, the Turk⁶⁰, a man of some pretention to learning. They gathered at Delhi from all parts of Hindustan, such as Gujrat, Sind and suburbs of the capital, and from places on the banks of Jamuna and Ganga. When Nur

preached the people used to gather round him. He incited the mind of the common people against the Sunnis and as a result on Friday in the month of *Rajab* 634 A.H./March 1237 A.D., a body of nearly one thousand Qaramitah attacked the Jami' Mosque with deadly weapons. This uprising was suppressed with difficulty by the regular army of the government.⁶¹

In spite of the uprising, the popularity of the Sultan at Delhi after her accession remained undiminished. In order to maintain her hold on the populace, the Sultan gave up female attire and veil (*Az libas 'aurat wa Pardah birun amad*; *T-i-N*, p. 188) and with coat and cap on she rode on an elephant so that the people could see her clearly. The Turkish Amirs, who had exercised a right to choose the monarch ever since *Iluttmish* was called from Badaon to assume the crown, were not however prepared to allow their right to lapse; they were determined to bring to book the Sultan who had violated their right and privilege. Moreso, because shortly after suppressing the revolt of the Amirs before the gates of the city, she had made two appointments, viz., Malik Ikhtiyaru'd-Din Itikin as the *Amir-i-Hajib* and Amir Jamalu'd-Din Yaqut as the *Amir-i-Akhur*.⁶² Perhaps she promoted⁶³ the Abyssinian to the post of master of horse in order to balance the power of the Turks who henceforth became extremely jealous.⁶⁴ But though bent on removing her they failed to undermine her authority in Delhi where she had acquired extreme popularity. Therefore rebellions in the provinces were stirred up so that she might be forced to leave the capital.

The first of these attempts was the rebellion of Malik Kabir Khan, the Muqti' of Lahore.⁶⁵ It was suppressed promptly but the second revolt led by Malik Altuniya, Muqti' of Tabarhindah, was successful in its object and the Sultan in her attempt to suppress it was made a prisoner. After this successful coup the conspirators placed Mu'izz-u'd-Din Bahram Shah, another son of Shamsu'd-Din *Iluttmish*, on the throne. The attempt of Razia to regain her throne by and with the help of Malik Altuniya, whom she married, failed and after being defeated by the Delhi army, the fugitive queen and her consort met their death at the hands of robbers on 25th *Rabi'ul awwal* 638 A.H./15 October 1240 A.D.⁶⁶ During the three years of Sultan Razia's rule, Delhi and its citizens had supported her unhesitatingly. The Amirs and Maliks, in spite of their concerted effort to remove her, never dared to storm the Royal palace or seize her person in the capital. They must have been afraid of the citizens of Delhi who had placed her on the

throne, and who would have opposed her removal by the Amirs with all their might. The Amirs had therefore to await their chance before their nefarious plan could be translated into action. The prime-mover in this capacity, *Amir-i-Hajib* Malik Itikin, was rightly paid back in his own coin, when Sultan Bahram caused his death immediately afterwards.

Sultan Mu'izzu'd-Din Bahram Shah (1240-42) was an unassuming and courageous person who had no taste for gorgeous attire and regal splendour. The Sultan, bent upon removing Naib Ikhtiyaru'd-Din who was imposed upon him, employed two assassins, who killed the Na'ib and mortally wounded the Wazir.⁶⁷ He thus incurred the displeasure of the Turkish nobles, the ringleader among whom, Wazir Nizamu'l-Mulk, Muhazzabu'd-Din, nurtured his grievance and awaited his opportunity. The long-awaited chance of revolt came with the news of Mongol occupation of Lahore and the Wazir skilfully utilised it to foment rebellion, among the Amirs who were sent to drive off the invaders, against the Sultan.⁶⁸

The Sultan's popularity in the city had prevented the Wazir from carrying out his plan so long. When the news of the Mongol raid reached the city of Delhi, and it was learnt that the defence of Lahore had to be abandoned because of non-cooperation from its citizens⁶⁹, the Sultan asked the historian Minhaju'd-Din to administer a new oath of allegiance to the people of Delhi, so that they might not follow the example set by the citizens of Lahore. The people did not budge an inch from the oath of allegiance because when the Amirs instead of marching against the Mongols, returned to besiege Delhi, the people of the city stood firm in their loyalty. Minhaju'd-Din states that during the siege of the capital many people lost their life (*Khalq-i-bisar halak shudand*)⁷⁰ and these people were undoubtedly those that opposed the Amirs led by Wazir Nizamu'l-Mulk. The siege lasted for nearly three months from Saturday, the 19th of *Shaban* 639 A.H. and went on until the 8th *Zu'lqa'dah*⁷¹, and many were killed on both side. An attempt to negotiate through Shaikhul-Islam Qutbu'd-Din failed and the rebellious Amirs ultimately captured the city and killed the Sultan. But they could achieve this success after much effort and not before they had destroyed the suburbs of the city (*Havali Shahr hamah Kharab gusht*; *T-i-N*, p. 196).

The Maliks placed 'Alau'd-Din Mas'ud Shah, son of Sultan Ruknu'd-Din Firuz, on the throne in May 1242 and administered an oath of allegiance to the people.⁷² The oath of alle-

giance taken by the people on an earlier occasion to Sultan Mu'izzu'd-Din Bahram in the Royal palace⁷³ was a voluntary one, but such perhaps was not the case this time.

The choice of the Malik fell on 'Alau'd-Din Mas'ud Shah, though sons of Iltutmish, viz., Malik Jalalu'd-Din and Nasiru'd-Din were still alive.⁷⁴ The reason was perhaps the reputation of the prince as a good-natured person (*Niku khalq bud*; *T-i-N*, p. 197). This reputation however he could not retain long because of the bad habits which he had developed. The very people that loved him started abhorring him. Moreover, his laxity and negligence of the state affairs together with his habit of killing nobles led to his deposition in 1246.⁷⁵

Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Mahmud Shah ascended the throne in June, 1246. During this long reign of nearly twenty years excepting for a brief period when he was ousted from power by Imdu'd-Din Rihan, Ulugh Khan-i-A'zam, the future Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban and the father-in-law of the Sultan, conducted the affairs of the state. Balban had to tackle a difficult task because of the repeated raids of the Mongols in the north-west, the rise of the local Hindu chieftains⁷⁶, and the intrigue and rebellion of Amirs and Malik. During this period, Delhi, the metropolitan city of the empire, was an important factor, nay rather the centre of gravity, in the politics of the country. Co-operation from the citizens of Delhi was essential in maintaining the authority of the State.

Imadu'd-Din Raihan who had lost his influence and position due to the machination of Balban and the Turkish party of the court had busied himself in undermining the authority of the Sultan in transgangetic region, in conjunction with Qutluq Khan, the stepfather of the monarch. In 653 A.H./1255 A.D. Raihan was defeated and killed and Qutluq Khan was ordered to leave Oudh. The fief of Bahraich was assigned to him.⁷⁷ The Malik resented this order and revolted and defeated an army sent against him; but being himself in turn defeated by Ulugh Khan, the rebellious Malik was forced to take shelter with the chief of Santargarh whose territory was ravaged by the Delhi forces.⁷⁸ In 1257 Qutluq Khan joined his forces with that of Uchh and Multan led by Malik 'Izzu'd-Din Kishli Khan-i-Balban in the neighbourhood of Samana.⁷⁹

Balban was sent at the head of an army to suppress this rebellion in May, 1257. While the two armies were facing each other some allies of the rebels in the capital secretly sent informations to them that if they came to the capital every one in the city would support them and they would find the gates

open. Their plan however was detected by the spies who informed Balban about this. Ulugh Khan asked the Sultan to take measures for driving off the conspirators from the city.

When the rebel army came and encamped in the vicinity of the city they found all the gates of the capital barred against them.⁸⁰ They were informed by their abettors⁸¹ that the city was empty of soldiers (*Shahr Khali ast az hasham*; T-i-N, p. 308). But though the gates were barred and there was no hope of any help from inside the city as was promised yet they could still storm the capital and occupy it. Inside the city the Sultan had ordered the city gates to be closed and fervent preparation was made to defend the capital. As the army was absent, *Amir-i-Hajib* 'Alau'd-Din, the Na'ib *Amir-i-Hajib*, the Diwan *'Ariz-i-Mamalik*, Ulugh Kotwal and such other nobles exhorted themselves in making the city secure. All the able-bodied individuals (*Mard-i-Jang*) were recruited and armed. At night the respectable men of the city and heads of families together with nobles took the responsibility of guarding the walls of the city.⁸² Thus the last hope of the rebels was lost, because the city was ably guarded by its citizens who co-operated with the Sultan in preserving the metropolis from the anarchy of baronical barbarities. The besieging forces were constantly apprehending the return of Ulugh Khan with his army.⁸³ The arrival of Malik Nusrat Khan Badaru'd-Din Sunkar Rumai also made them decide to retreat in haste.⁸⁴

But among the soldiers who had accompanied them there were many who refused to follow the rebel leaders. They asked for forgiveness of the Sultan and joined the royal army.⁸⁵ Perhaps they too were not ready to play to the ambition of the Amirs, and it is quite possible that some among them belonged to the city, the sight of which incited in them a longing to go back to its bosom, where they hoped perhaps to find shelter in a warm and peaceful home, to meet long-awaiting and yearning dear ones again. They therefore refused to accompany the rebel chiefs and go on travel. Thus Delhi the capital was saved from the ravages of civil war and occupation by the mercenaries of Qutluq Khan and 'Izzu'd-Din Balban's army due to the bravery of its citizens. The strength of the rebel army for creating further disturbance was also minimised due to the desertions that took place prior to their departure from the gates of the city. The gravity of the situation had made Balban extremely anxious about the fate of the capital and the Sultan. But on the way back his anxiety was relieved by the news of the

deliverance of the city. It was to the citizens of Delhi that Nasiru'd-Din Mahmud owed his crown on this occasion.

After the death of Sultan Nasiru'd-Din, the all-powerful deputy (Na'ib), Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban ascended the throne of Delhi, and ruled the country with an iron hand for nearly a quarter of a century (1265-87). Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban was one of the most remarkable rulers that Mediaeval India produced. He had an exaggerated idea about the dignity of the Sultan, and never consented to meet men of low origin, or entertain them.⁸⁶ This attitude of Balban was largely the outcome of his determination to put down the anarchy of the past and to crush the 'Forty'.⁸⁷ The rivalry with Raihan also had convinced the Sultan of the need for establishing the superiority of the Turkish race. He therefore excluded men of low origin from his presence. But this race superiority complex, common to all the Turkish Amirs and Maliks, did not blind him to the fact that the goodwill of the people is essential for the sake of stable government. Sultan Balban in spite of his show and display would take his seat among all at times of prayer and discussion in the mosque (*Dar miyan-i-khalq binishasti*: Barani, p. 47). He was in favour of maintaining a show of equality with all his subjects, between the high and low, the Hindus and the Muslims, the learned and the fools, the intelligent and the stupid, the informed and uninformed.⁸⁸ His justice attracted the people of Hindustan towards his rule.⁸⁹ Delhi which had already become a place of shelter for those who had escaped the Mongol sword acquired a great importance in the Muslim world, after the fall of Baghdad in 1258 A.D. Princes, courtiers, learned men, musicians and many others from Central Asia, Khiva, Samarqand, Kasghar and so on came to *Daru'l-Mulk* Delhi to find shelter and to settle in place. In Delhi fifteen *mahallas* or quarters grew up named after the princes that took shelter in the city, such as Mahalla 'Abbasi, Mahalla Sanjari, Mahalla Khwarajam Shahi, and so on.⁹⁰

Balban was a statesman of blood and iron. He therefore wanted to strike terror in the heart of his subjects⁹¹, so that they might be afraid of the king. He would overthrow a whole army or a city for the rebellion of one man.⁹² He was ruthless towards all his opponents whether they belonged to the corps of the 'Forty' or Hindu rebels of Katear⁹³, or the Mewatis who raided the vicinity of the city at night.⁹⁴ But even Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban had to alter his decision due to the request made by the citizens of Delhi at least on two occasions.

The first event concerned 2,000 horsemen of Sultan Shams-ud-Din's army who had received villages in the Doab by way of pay. For more than thirty or forty years they had enjoyed these lands; some among them had become old and infirm, while others had died and their sons had taken possession of these lands as inheritance, and had their names recorded with the Muster-Master.⁶⁵ They considered themselves as proprietors of the land which they treated as given to them in free gift. Some of them leisurely went to their military duties, while others secured exemption by bribing the Na'ib 'Ariz-i-Mamalik (deputy Muster-Master) with bribe of wine, goats, hen, pigeon and corn.⁶⁶ The Sultan ordered enquiry into the matter and after being appraised of the situation he divided the Shamsi horsemen into three categories. On the old and infirm he settled a pension of forty to fifty *tankas*, and resumed their villages; on the able-bodied a suitable allowance was granted, but though not deprived of their grants, they had to submit the surplus revenue to the government; the widows and orphans were also pensioned off and their grants relapsed to the state. This measure caused great dissatisfaction among the old Shamsi grantees many of whom were the inhabitants of the city of Delhi. The resumption of the grant created commotion in all quarters of the town (*Dar har mahallti dar Shahr Shuri Paida amad*; Barani, p. 63). The Shamsi slaves were scattered all over the city and the loss of their income in old age moved them to despair. Those on whom the order of resumption of their grant was served assembled together and went to Maliku'l-Umra Fakhru'd-Din, the Kotwal of the city who was moved by their distress. They maintained that they had received the land in free gift and they enjoyed their *iqts* for fifty years and out of this income they and their families kept body and soul together. Weeping and complaining they pointed out that they had served the *diwan-i-'Ariz* as long as they had the ability and so in their old age they should not be deprived of their rightly deserved pension. The aged Kotwal felt for them and brought the matter to the notice of the Sultan in a very tactful manner.⁶⁷ The Sultan was moved to compassion and the grantees were confirmed in their possession. Thus the old Shamsi horsemen were able to gain their point by making a concerted effort. Though the cancellation of the previous order was not to the liking of the Sultan, yet his hand was forced by the protest and appeal of the Shamsi horsemen through the Kotwal.

Another event in which the Sultan had to give way occurred when he returned from Lakhnawti, after suppressing the revolt of Tughril Khan, and installing his own son Bughra Khan as the governor of the place. The Sultan ordered gibbets to be erected for hanging those followers of Tughril (*Yar-i-Tughril*) who were the inhabitants of Delhi and its environs and had joined Tughril at Lakhnawti.⁹⁸ The Sultan had carried these prisoners in fetters from Lakhnawti to Delhi and deferred their punishment till his arrival in the capital.⁹⁹ The news spread in the city and caused dismay among the inhabitants of the town for many people in Delhi and its environs had relations and connections among the prisoners. The Qazi of the army being moved by this cause of public sorrow went to the Sultan on Friday night and persuaded him to refrain from punishing the prisoners. Most of the prisoners were men of no consequence and were set free, some of the better known were banished in the neighbouring towns, and some were kept in prisons. The most notorious among them were ordered to be mounted on buffaloes, and to be paraded round the city as an exemplary punishment. After some time the Qazi appealed again to the Sultan on behalf of those that were kept in prison, and obtained their release.¹⁰⁰ Thus even a stern ruler like Balban was swayed by the pressure of public demand.

After Balban's demise, the court faction under the leadership of Kotwal Fakhru'd-Din placed Kaiquabad, the son of Bughra Khan, on the throne in 686 A.H./1287 A.D. Mu'izzu'd-Din Kaiquabad was an inexperienced youth, brought up rigorously so long under the eyes of his stern grandfather. He now found himself suddenly at the helm of affairs. The struggle for ascendancy between the Khalji and Turks that ensued in the latter part of the reign resulted in the establishment of the Khalji dynasty on the throne.¹⁰¹

The people of Delhi played a vital part in the whole drama, and were not mere spectators to the show. According to Zia'u'd-Din Barani, an eye witness to the events¹⁰², all the people of Delhi including the noble and the plebeian, the low and the high, came out of the twelve gates of Delhi to rescue the boy Sultan Shamsu'd-Din from the hands of the Khaljis who had carried him to Baharpur.¹⁰³ *Khawas, wa 'awam Khurd wa buzurg-i-Shahr az duwazdah darwazah bi nusrat-i-Pisar-i-Sultan birun amadand wa rah-i-Baharpur giristand.* It appears that they had deliberately chosen the Badaon gate as their place of assemblage because in point of importance,

the Badaon gate exceeded all other gateways of the city. "The Badaon gate was also the scene of contention between rival factions, of deadly contest between foreign enemies and the king of Delhi; and the grand entrance for the procession of kings and foreign ambassadors."¹⁰⁴ To reach the gate one had to cross a populous street occupied by the cloth merchants of Delhi. Thus it appears that in their determination to save the young Sultan all sections of people including the merchants and ordinary men joined. The situation demanded a man like Fakhr'u'd-Din who was held high in esteem by all the citizens of Delhi to persuade them to disperse peacefully. He had a great influence both in and outside the court circle and he now used it for the rising dynasty. The reason is not far to seek. His own son-in-law and nephew was poisoned to death by Kaiqubad and two of his sons were carried away by the Khaljis to Baharpur. So that out of a desire to be avenged and at the same time to save his own sons, he used his influence in favour of the Khaljis.

According to Barani, the people of Delhi had a dislike for the Khaljis and were not ready to accept them as rulers of the country. Thus the uprising followed from their antipathy to the rule of the Khalji whom they believed to be of non-Turkish origin.¹⁰⁵ This belief was not based on reality.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, as will be evident from the happenings of the reign of Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Firuz Khalji, even Turkish nobles did not hesitate to join him after his accession, though Delhi did not accept him for a long time and he had to make Kilughari his residence. Therefore the dislike of the Khaljis in the common man of the city did not follow from a negative cause only. It was to a large extent due to the loyalty that the Ilbari Turks had earned for their dynasty after nearly a century of their rule. A blind loyalty for the ruling house was a natural phenomenon for the citizens of Delhi¹⁰⁷, and this self-propelled uprising of the people at Delhi was the outcome of such loyalty. The citizens of Delhi disliked a dynastic change engineered by powerful sections of the aristocracy and, but for the influence exerted by the aged Kotwal, were ready to face an unequal civil war for the sake of restoring the reigning dynasty. A great attachment to the royal house and the reigning dynasty among the people seems to be the real cause behind this uprising. Even after his accession to the throne Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Firuz Khalji did not visit Delhi for some time because of the dislike that the people of Delhi showed towards him.

NOTES

1. Howorth, *History of the Mongols*, Vol. I, pp. 78-103, Vol. III, p. 127.
2. Afif says that seven earlier fortifications which had fallen into decay supplied the bricks of the new city that was constructed by Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq. The old Hindu city with the fort of Prithviraj III; Kilughari, the abode of Sultan Kaiqubad and Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Khalji; Siri, the new city built by Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji; Tughluqabad, constructed by Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq; and Jahanpanah, built by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq may be mentioned in this connection. *T-i-N*, pp. 317-18; Afif; p. 376; *Rahla*, pp. 25-28; E and D, Vol. II, p. 216.
3. E and D, Vol. III, p. 575.
4. Raverty, p. 646.
5. E and D, Vol. III, p. 575.
6. *Ibid.*, Afif, pp. 349, 353.
7. *T-i-A*, pp. 125-26.
8. Barani, p. 119.
9. Badhoni, p. 130; Ferishta (Eng. translation by Briggs), Vol. I, p. 252; N. N. Law, *Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule*, pp. 24-27.
10. Barani, p. 296.
11. *T-i-A*, pp. 169-72.
12. *Qiranu's-Sa'adain* (Aligarh ed.), p. 28.
13. Afif, p. 179.
14. E and D, Vol. III, p. 562.
15. According to Barani, p. 384, the prices of accomplished slave girls in the days of Sultan Mubarak Khalji rose even up to 2,000 tankas.
16. Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fuwadu'l-Fuwad*, pp. 137, 239.
17. Barani, p. 300.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 318-19.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 475; *Chronicles*, p. 245.
20. Afif, p. 337.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
22. Barani, pp. 384-86.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 486; Afif, p. 334.
24. According to the author of *Masalik*, the revenues of places assigned to the Khans, Malikis, and Amirs brought much more than their esteemed value. "The Khan received a grant of two lacs of tankas, each tanka being worth 8 dirham. This belongs to him personally, and he is not expected to disburse any part of it to the soldiers who fight under his order. The Malik receives an amount varying from 60,000 to 80,000 tankas, the Amir from 40,000 to 30,000 and *isfahsa'lar* 20,000 or thereabouts. The pay of the officers varies from 10,000 to 1,000 tankas. A mamluk receives 500 tankas and all receive in addition food and raiment and forage for their horses. Soldiers and mamluks receive not land revenue grant but draw their pay in money from the public treasury." E and D, Vol. III, p. 577.

25. Barani, p. 119.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
27. According to Barani "they hold Kafirs and pagans in the greatest respect and esteem and honour them highly by considering them as Zimmis and Kharaji believing as payers of Jizyah and Khiraj they are protected people. In view of this they concede to Kafirs and pagans the insignia—the drums, the standards, tight tunics, bejewelled and brocaded and well-equipped horses; they also confer on them responsible offices including governorship of provinces." An extract translation from *Fatawa-i-Jahandari* by Barani. See *I.H.C.*, 1948. It should be noted that the irritation of Barani was against the upper class in the Hindu Society not against the poor.
28. Afif, p. 136.
29. H. Nelson Wright, *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi*, p. 73.
30. According to the calculation of K. M. Ashraf, the cost of living of a person would not exceed 1 tanka per month. "The author of Masaliku'l-absar on the authority of his informant cites the case of a person named Khojandi. Along with three other friends, Khojandi was served with a meal consisting of roast beef, bread and butter, the total cost of which came to 1 jital. If we calculate on this basis and take two meals a day as the diet of an average person it will work out 15 jitals per month. Putting 5 jitals extra for morning breakfast, the average dietary expenses of one person would come to 20 jitals per month. If we make similar allowances for clothes and other expenses, the maximum cost would not exceed one tanka per month." *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan* (Jiwan Prakashan, Delhi), p. 131.
31. It consisted of such men as Hatiya paik, a co-conspirator of Sidi Maula (Barani, p. 210). See *Khaza'in* (Habib trans.), p. 10 for dishonesty of shop-keepers and measures taken against them.
32. Badaoni (Ranking Eng. translation), p. 253.
33. *Khaza'in* (Habib trans.), p. 11.
34. Barani, p. 171.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 245. It was a blunder on the part of Arkali Khan to have refused Malika Jahana who later on invited him to take charge of affairs at Delhi.
36. E and D, Vol. II, p. 219.
37. Chand Bardai, *Prithvi Raj Raso* (Nagri Pracharani Granthamala), Vol. V, Canto 66, vv. 147-62, gives a list of names of the merchants such as Sremanito Saho, Sridhar, Sundar, Yasodhar, etc. *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II (2nd Ed. translated by Jarret and Sarkar), pp. 306-07 confirms the story.
38. Vaidya, *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. III, p. 335.
39. The bardic annals of Chand Bardai contains in the words of Dr. H. C. Roy (*Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, p. 1085).

'Historical Kernel', which is very well illustrated by the love story of Chitrlekha, the Gakkhar princess, and Hussain Khan, a cousin of Shihabn'd-Din, a distinguished warrior living at the court of Ghazna (See *Raso* E.N., pp. 423-24). According to Dr. Trivedi the genealogy in *Prithviraj Raso*, the story about Visaldeva, the battle of Mewatis with the Mughals, the story of Somesvara's death at the hands of Bhimdeva Chalukya, and the revenge taken by Prithviraj on the latter, the circumstances about the death of Prithviraj, as well as the use of Arabic and Persian vocabulary are pointed out as proofs of the lack of authority of Chand. But because as yet no authentic edition of *Prithviraj Raso* has been compiled, all these questions must remain undecided. V. V. Trivedi, *Rebatal Samaya*, p. 222.

40. *J.R.A.S.* (1913), p. 273; *Prithviraj Vijaya* of Jayanaka with commentary by Jonraj (ed. by G. S. Oja & Pandit Chandradhar Sharma), pp. 139-40.
41. See Chapter VI.
42. *T-i-N*, p. 137. He never gave less than one lakh *dhiram* to any one. *Futuhu's-Salatin*, p. 101.
43. Raverty, pp. 528-29.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 606.
45. *T-i-N*, pp. 165, 169-70.
46. *Rehla*, p. 33.
47. *Ibid.*, *T-i-N*, p. 166. According to Ibn Battuta he ordered all the oppressed to wear dyed garment, while all the inhabitants of India usually wear white garment. Whenever his eyes fell on a person with dyed garment he forthwith did him justice. He also placed an iron chain with balls round two stone in the palace gate, for the use of those who wanted to appeal to the Sultan for justice.
48. Barani, p. 28.
49. *T-i-N*, pp. 185-86.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 182-84.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 184.
55. *Idem*. He used to ride on elephant in a drunken state through the bazar of the city and scatter *tankas* of real gold around him for the people to pick up and rejoice over it.
56. *Rehla*, p. 34.
57. *T-i-N*, p. 184; *I.H.Q.*, 1940.
58. *T-i-N*, p. 186.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 186-87.
60. According to Prof. K. A. Nizmi. Nur, the Turk, had nothing to do with Mulahidah uprising. He ascribes the following reasons for his assertion :—(a) Shaikh Nizamu'd-Din Auliya refers to him as purer

than rain water, (b) He is mentioned as Maulana by Amir-i-Khurd and Shaikh 'Addu'l-Haqq Muhaddith of Delhi, (c) Razia sent presents to him and Baba Farid attended his sermon, (d) He spent his last days at Mecca, K. A. Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Faridu'd-Din Ganji-Shahar*, p. 31 f.n. 6.

61. *T-i-N*, p. 189.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 187-88.
63. Jamalu'd-Din Yaqut was appointed Amir Akhur "from the days of Shah and Shahzade", i.e. Iltutmish and Ruknu'd-Din. He was a supporter of Sultan Razia from the beginning. *Futuh*, p. 129.
64. *T-i-N*, p. 188; regarding the charge of intimacy between the Sultan and the Haysi master of horses, Minhaj has nothing to say. He simply states that Yaqut gained preference in the service of the Sultan (bi Khidmat-i-Sultan Qurbati uftad). The words used by Minhaj cannot by any stretch of imagination imply any unholy intimacy between the Sultan and her master of horse.
65. *Ibid.*, pp. 188, 235.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 190.
67. *T-i-N*, p. 192.
68. See Chapter VI.
69. *T-i-N*, p. 194.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 198.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
74. Both of them were released by Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Mas'ud Shah and Jalalu'd-Din was given the fief of Qanauj and Nasiru'd-Din, Bahraich (*Ibid.*, pp. 199, 208).
75. *T-i-N*, pp. 201, 209; *Futuh*, p. 139.
76. *T-i-N*, pp. 211, 212, 215, 216 etc.
77. *Ibid.*, pp. 220, 304.
78. Raverty, p. 839, f.n. Santargarh is situated in latitude 30°24', longitude 78°5'.
79. *T-i-N*, pp. 223, 307.
80. It had taken the rebel army two and a half days to reach Delhi, from their place of encampment. In the meantime they had sent a letter to Ulugh Khan through a messenger promising to submit if they were granted immunity and fair treatment. Ulugh Khan's reply was half sweet and half bitter. He promised them fair treatment on submission but threatened to punish them otherwise. He was waiting for further reply, but after two days he heard the news of their departure for Delhi. Thus the rebels had played a trick and Ulugh Khan had no time to catch them up. He naturally became anxious for the Sultan and the capital. *Ibid.*, pp. 223, 309-10.
81. Raverty, pp. 706-07.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 709.
83. *T-i-N*, pp. 225, 310.
84. Raverty, p. 788.

85. *T-i-N*, p. 224.
86. Barani, pp. 29, 32, 34, 36.
87. See Chapter II.
88. Barani, p. 74.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
90. *Perishta*, Vol. I, p. 131.
91. Barani, pp. 29, 32.
92. *T-i-A* (B.I.), pp. 85-86.
93. Barani, pp. 58-59. Katchr is modern Rahitkhund. So many rebels were killed in this place that blood flowed like stream after the royal army had suppressed the rebellion.
94. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-57.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
97. One day the Kotwal approached the Sultan with a thoughtful and dejected face and on enquiry from the latter about the cause of dejection he said that resumption of the grant of land of the Shamsi horsemen had made him anxious about his own future because he too had become old. The Kotwal added that if old men are to be rejected in the day of judgment and are to find no place in heaven what will happen to him. The words of the old Kotwal moved the king to compassion. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 107. *Perishta*, Vol. I, p. 141.
99. Barani, p. 92.
100. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
101. See Chapter II.
102. Barani, p. 175.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 172; Baharpur lies on the Jamuna some 6 or 7 miles east of the old Delhi and south-west of Kilughari—*History of the Khaljis*, pp. 7-8.
104. Carr Stephen, *The Archaeology and Monumental Remains of Delhi*, pp. 35-36.
105. Barani, p. 172.
106. For a discussion on the origin of the Khalji see above Chapter II.
107. Sir Percy Sykes, *History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 489 mentions a similar incident in Persian history, Shahr-Baraz, a general in alliance with the Roman emperor Heraclius, usurped the throne by removing a minor king named Artaxerxes. His own soldiers killed him, and carried his corpse through the streets of the capital, crying out "who ever not being of the blood royal, seats himself on the throne of Persia, will share the fate of Shahr-Baraz". This event took place in 629 A.D. A similar sentiment inspired the people of Delhi to rise in favour of the reigning dynasty. It mattered very little for them whether the usurper was a man of Turkish origin or not.

CHAPTER IV
PLEBEIANS IN DELHI POLITICS DURING
KHALJI RULE

I

The New Dynasty

In the beginning of the year 1290, Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Khalji ascended the throne at Kilughari but did not dare to enter Delhi in fear of the citizens. Barani clearly states that *u az hiras shahryian darun Dihl navaft*, i.e., he in fear of the citizens did not go to Delhi because the ordinary citizens of Delhi (*'am'a Khalq shahr*) could not accept this change of dynasty from their heart of hearts.¹ This attitude of the ordinary people of this city was not of course shared by the aristocrats who were always profuse in their show of loyalty to the power that be, and the great men and nobles, the learned, the officials and celebrities with whom the city was then filled, went out to pay their respects to the new Sultan at Kilughari. The nobles and celebrities of the city built their houses at Kilughari and a regular market grew up in the new township that developed around the palace of the Sultan. Some time passed before the Sultan could remove the distrust of people, by the excellence of his character, his justice and benevolence. He won over the allegiance of the people also by the hopes of reward which he held out.²

When the Sultan came to Delhi, he made a great show of his respect to Balban, his former master. The Sultan came to the Red Palace dismounted and went inside barefooted. He professed loudly that the fear of Balban whom he had served was still in his mind.³ After all, this fear was not the fear of the phantom of Sultan Balban, it was the outcome of the guilty conscience of an usurper afraid of offending the people who still cherished the memory of the days of the Ilbari Turkish dynasty. He was afraid of ascending the throne before which he had stood as a courtier, and out of respect to the memory of Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban took his seat in the line which had been assigned to the Amirs and Maliks during the rule of

the former Sultan. He invoked curses on Aitmar Surkha and Aitmar Kachhan and said that by their designs to kill him, they compelled him, out of a fear for life¹, to take up arms for self-preservation, otherwise he would have led a contented life as a Malik or Khan. He ended his loud denunciation of those that forced him to take up the responsibility of ruling a kingdom by voicing the fear that haunted him. "God only knows", said Jalalu'd-Din Khalji, "how it may fare either with me or with my descendants."²

This public demonstration of loyalty to Sultan Balban and the philosophical diatribe into which he indulged was quite hypocritical, because he had deliberately planned to remove the descendants of Sultan Balban from his path.³ In Bengal the descendants of Balban were still ruling, at Delhi Malik Chhaju, the nephew of Balban, looked askance at the rise of the Khaljis to power. It was out of a clash of cross current of court politics that Sultan Jalalu'd-Din and the Khaljis grabbed power from the tottering hands of Sultan Mu'izzu'd-Din and the Turkish party. The demonstration of loyalty made by Sultan Jalalu'd-Din was of no use, and at least the younger section of the Khalji party did not like it.⁴ But it was not meant for their ears, it was actually addressed to the citizens of Delhi, whose heart he wanted to melt in his favour.

The citizens of Delhi however had a soft corner for the descendants of Balban. When Malik Chhaju raised his standard of rebellion in the second year of Sultan Jalalu'd-Din's reign, he had the sympathy of Delhi. People from all parts of Hindustan joined his camp.⁵ When he marched towards the capital the people of Delhi as also of the neighbouring villages heard the news with joy and satisfaction. They remembered the benefits received from the forefathers, and felt that the Khaljis had no claim to the throne of Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban. The irregular volunteers and motley collection of soldiers⁶ was defeated by Arkali Khan, the second son of the Sultan⁷, and the leaders were brought to Delhi as prisoners. When the followers of Chhaju like Malik Amir 'Ali Sarjandar, and other nobles were brought before the Sultan, a public darbar was held, and instead of awarding punishment to them as was expected by all, the Sultan released them after attending to their needs and drinking wine with them.⁸ He told them that they had acted rightly in drawing their swords in support of their benefactor.⁹ Later on the Sultan explained that he had not spilled the blood of any Mussalman up till his old age, and he was not ready to soil his hand at the fag end of his life.

He was also averse to do harm to the descendants of his former master.¹³ But in reality his mercy to the rebels flowed not merely out of compassion and gratitude; it was the outcome on the other hand of an attempt to gratify popular sentiment which demanded moderation in favour of the descendants of Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban.

Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Khalji was conscious of his weakness as an usurper and founder of a new dynasty.¹⁴ He was always in favour therefore of striking a compromise, and even with foreign invaders like 'Abdu'llah, the grandson of Hulagu the Mongol, he entered into friendly relation. His policy was largely guided by the fact that the people of Hindustan, specially the citizens of Delhi, did not accept his rule enthusiastically and the Sultan's sole desire was to consolidate his hold over them by following a policy of moderation and peace. That his moderation was not merely an outcome of his piety and aversion to shed Muslim blood is quite evident from the incident of Sidi Maula. The cruelty with which Sidi Maula was put to death shows that Sultan Jalalu'd-Din could vie with any other ruler of mediaeval times in the inhumanity of his punishment.¹⁵ Sidi Maula together with some disaffected nobles and Qazi Jalal Kashani had planned to assassinate the Sultan on his way to the mosque on Friday. Hafiya Paik and Kotwal Birinjtan were assigned the task of murdering the Sultan. The plan was to marry Sidi with a daughter of Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Mahmud, and place him on the throne.¹⁶ The Sultan came to know of it and had Sidi Maula and his associates arrested. Qazi Jalal Kashani was sent to Badaon as Qazi of that place. The Amirs and Maliks and other associates of Sidi Maula were given suitable punishment. But none of the accused confessed to their guilt. The Sultan wanted to elicit the truth by placing them on a fire of ordeal at Baharpur. The 'Ulama however objected to such a procedure. Being exasperated he turned towards Shaikh Abu Bakr Tusi and his followers and exclaimed like King Henry II of England¹⁷, 'Oh darveshes, avenge me of the Maula.' One among them leaped out and struck Sidi Maula with a razor, and immediately afterwards an elephant driver working under the order of Arkali Khan trampled him to death.¹⁸

Sidi Maula and his associates had repeatedly pleaded innocence, yet the Sultan did not relent, because he was determined to crush the power of the Balbani party who were supporters of Sidi Maula.¹⁹ Chance had offered a golden opportunity for the Khalji Sultan to crush the supporters of

the last dynasty, because it would afford now no chance for his critics to ascribe to him any ulterior motive against those that were loyal to Balban and his descendants; the incident offered no opportunity to the people of Delhi to raise their voice of protest; the Sultan could crush his opposition and at the same time retain his mask of a just ruler taking a rightful revenge upon the rebellious and unruly conspirators. The Sultan, therefore, did not hesitate to strike at once. The incident of Sidi Maula is an eye-opener because it reveals clearly that the Sultan's aversion to shedding Muslim blood in his old age²⁰, flowed not from a non-violent bent of mind but as a matter of policy. Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Khalji knew that though the Maula had a large number of following and enjoyed much popularity²¹, yet by crushing him the Sultan would achieve an object which he could not materialise openly, *viz.*, that of crushing the supporters of Balban. The rebellion of Malik Chhaju and the sympathy that he had received in the capital had convinced Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Khalji of the need of taking measures to crush the supporters of Balban. The alleged conspiracy of Sidi Maula offered him the chance to do so without affording the people of Delhi an opportunity to protest in their favour.

II

Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji (1296-1316)

Before Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Khalji could efface from the mind of the people their aversion to Khalji rule and entrench himself in their sympathy and love, he died a cruel death at the hands of his own nephew, 'Alau'd-Din Khalji, who declared himself the Sultan. 'Alau'd-Din did not leave any stone unturned for winning over the populace to his cause, and to wash his heinous crime by lavish distribution of his plundered wealth from Davagiri. On his way to Delhi, he distributed gold from a light and movable catapult (*manjanig*). In every stage of his march from Karra to Delhi five *mans* of gold star were placed in *manjanig*, and discharged among the spectators in front of the royal tent.²² By spending lavishly he easily won over to his side those who felt no gratitude for Sultan Jalalu'd-Din. People from far and wide gathered to collect the wealth scattered by him. As he proceeded his army swelled in number, and after his accession, "he gave away quinters and quinters of gold."²³

But in spite of this gold-rush among the poor and ignorant

as also among the Jalali nobles like Malik Taju'd-Din Kuchi who with his following had deserted to 'Alau'd-Din Khalji at Badaon, the conscientious and honourable citizens of the capital accused these deserters as traitors to their patron and benefactor. Those who had joined the cause of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din, however, defended their position by pointing out that the end of Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Khalji was foredoomed from the day when he went to Karra to visit his nephew and therefore their accusers were unjust in blaming them.²⁴ But the party of Alau'd-Din had become too strong by this time, so whether a section of people liked him or not the *Khutbah* was read and coins were struck in his name.²⁵

During the reign of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji the Mongols renewed their raids in India with vigour. The Mongols²⁶ had started their raids into Hindustan from the days of Sultan Iltutmish. In India their raids in the north-west had needed all the efforts of able generals and rulers like Balban to check the tide. The reign of Sultan Kaiqubad had passed in comparative peace due to a lull in their raids, but Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Khalji struck a compromise with them. The Mongol danger reappeared again in the north-west with renewed vigour in the reign of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji. Fortunately for India, in Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji the country had an able military leader to counteract the danger. But in spite of the measures taken by the Sultan, the Mongol invaders twice besieged Delhi, once in 1299 under Qutlugh Khwajah²⁷, and again in 1303 under their leader Targhi.²⁸

The Mongols had carried fire and sword in the Islamic world in the middle of the thirteenth century of the Christian era.²⁹ They had destroyed beautiful garden cities like Baghdad, Samarqand and Bokhara.³⁰ In 1258 when they occupied Baghdad the Mongols killed 800,000 of its inhabitants including the Caliph Al-Musta'asim bi'llah.³¹ One of the refugees from Bokhara tersely described the Mongol occupation of the city, when in reply to anxious enquiries he said, "The Mongols came, dug, burnt, slaughtered, plundered and departed."³² They had coldbloodedly reduced flourishing cities into heaps of ruins and laid wealthy provinces waste. The Mongol philosophy of life may be understood from a saying of Chingiz Khan who once asked his boon companions about the greatest joy of life. One after another answered, some one suggested hunting, others riding or hawking or sport. But at such answer their leader shook his head, and then said, "The greatest joy a man can know is to conquer his enemies and drive them before him.

To ride their horses and take away their possessions. To see the faces of those who were dear to them bedewed with tears, and to clasp their wives and daughters in his arms."³³

In Hindustan too their raid and devastation had caused dismay all round, and the poet Amir Khusraw, who had suffered imprisonment at their hands, says that God had created them out of hell fire, and they looked like so many white demons, and the people fled from them everywhere.³⁴ In another place the same author says that as a result of the Mongol invasion of 1305 "People fled from their burning houses with their heads and feet on fire threw themselves into rivers and torrents."³⁵ The mantle of defending Hindustan from the devastation of these barbarians fell on the shoulder of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji, and he did not shirk the responsibility; rather he took much risk personally for defending his kingdom and capital from the hands of the Mongol hordes.

The Sultan knew that vacillation in face of foreign danger would undermine his authority and prestige in the eyes of his subjects. When Mongols under Qutluq Khwajah besieged the capital³⁶, the Sultan decided to meet the invaders and led the army personally. 'Alau'l Mulk, the corpulent Kotwal who was given the charge of the city, the royal harem, and the treasures, advised the Sultan to refrain from hazarding a conflict and exposing his own life to danger.³⁷ But the Sultan understood his people better than his advisers did. The Sultan knew it for certain that the fate of his rule, and the prestige of the kingdom largely depended upon his ability to tide over the crisis of foreign danger. The Sultan therefore commended the sincerity of the Kotwal, but declined to follow his advice and said, "If I follow your advice to whom could I show my face? Now how could I get into my harem? Of what account would the people hold me? And where would be the daring and courage which is necessary to keep my turbulent people in submission?"³⁸ The Sultan's daring and courage in resisting the barbarians who had already created havoc in half of the civilized world must have elicited the appreciation of his subjects, who readily acquiesced in many of the rigorous measures taken to maintain a large army for defending the country from Mongol invaders.³⁹

In order to counteract further Mongol aggression, Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji decided to maintain a large army. He fixed the remuneration of the soldiers at two hundred and thirty-four *tankas* and paid an extra amount of seventy-eight *tankas* to those who maintained two horses.⁴⁰ In order that his soldiers

might purchase goods at lower price in the capital and its surrounding areas, he fixed the prices of various necessities of life. Thus the prices of food grains⁴¹, cloth and piece goods⁴², horses and slave girls⁴³, and other sundry articles were fixed in the capital. The enforcement of those regulations regarding prices involved the problem of supply, transport and imposition of check on hoarding⁴⁴, as also storing of grains at royal granaries, so that at times of famine people might secure essential articles at fixed prices. Thus rationing of food grains at periods of famine was enforced. All those merchants who carried goods from afar were placed under the control of the *Shahna-i-Mandi* Malik Qabul, and were forced to set up their family establishment at Delhi.⁴⁵ Hoarding in an area of hundred *kos* around Delhi was prohibited, and peasants were forced to sell their surplus to the government at fixed price. The traders were helped to procure grain by the government officers and employees of the revenue department.⁴⁶ At times of famine or draught a quantity of corn sufficient for the daily supply of each quarter of the city was allotted to dealers every day from the market, and half a *man* used to be allowed to the ordinary purchaser in the market.⁴⁷ The Sultan used to keep himself informed about the market prices personally and severe punishments were awarded to those who violated these regulations.⁴⁸ All these regulations had one object in view, viz., to keep the capital well-supplied, and Sultan 'Alau'd-Din achieved a great success in his aim because during his reign not a single *dang* of the market price fluctuated.

Even the during the days of scarcity, the civil and military population of the capital did not feel any difficulty in procuring the daily necessities of life from caps to shoes, from combs to needle, from a shoemaker's knife to green vegetables.⁴⁹ The surrounding territories of Delhi, the peasants of Doab, were fleeced to keep up the supply of the city. But at least the ordinary man of the street in the capital had nothing to complain against the rigorous measures imposed by the Sultan on dishonest traders or shopkeepers who tried to cheat the purchaser by giving short weight and found no reason perhaps to shed tears for the dishonest shopkeepers who were forced to mend their ways or the robber, thief or pick-pocket who were severely punished.⁵⁰ Delhi did not stir against the rigour of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din's methods, largely due to the benefits that accrued to the ordinary citizens from the regulations which secured perennial supply at fixed price of daily essentials in spite of famine or draught.

Prior to the introduction of these economic regulations there had taken place in the city a thunderous outburst against the oppression of Tirmidi, a Kotwal of Delhi. This rebellion took place due to the negligence and oppression on the part of Kotwal Tirmidi, and was led by an ex-slave of Malik'ul-Umara Fakhru'd-Din. Haji Maula, the leader of this rebellion, had struck friendship with the ex-Kotwali officers.⁵¹

During this period, Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji was prosecuting his siege at Ranthambhor, and Tirmidi was left in-charge of the city. At Siri where a new fort was under construction, 'Alau'd-Din Ayaz, the father of Ahmad Ayaz, was holding the same office. Haji Maula saw that the oppression of Tirmidi had created dissatisfaction and the city was denuded of soldiers. The condition of the siege at Ranthambhor was such that the Sultan could not leave behind any soldiers in the capital.

One midday in the month of Ramazan 700, A.H. (May, 1301 A.D.), with a band of armed followers and *pais* he went to the house of the Kotwal Tirmidi who was falsely informed about the arrival of an order from the Sultan. As soon as the unsuspecting Kotwal came out to receive it, he was cut into two.⁵² Haji Maula now summoned Kotwal 'Alau'd-Din Ayaz, intending to do away with him also, but the latter had already received scent of the disturbance, and instead of going out to meet the former, gathered his followers around him, and refused to open the gates of the new fort.⁵³

Haji Maula followed a most novel method of securing adherents, because the first step that he took after entering the Red Palace was to liberate the prisoners many of whom after liberation became his followers. The arms that were brought out from the royal armoury helped the rebels to provide themselves with sufficient weapon, and horses brought from the royal stable were utilised by them. Bags of gold *tankas* were also brought out from the treasury and distributed among the people. An 'Alawi (descendant of 'Ali), related on his mother's side with Sultan Iltutmish⁵⁴, was placed on the throne at the Red Palace, and the principal men of the city were forced to pay him respect.

The news reached Sultan 'Alau'd-Din at Ranthambhor, but he did not divulge it to his soldiers for obvious reasons. The city was under the rebels for nearly a week.⁵⁵ On the third or fourth day, Amir Hamiu'd-Din, Amir of Kuh and his sons all of whom were valient men, together with his retinue, arrived at Delhi and forced the Ghazna gate. A number of followers

of Zafar Khan arrived from Amroha, and helped in suppressing the rebels.⁶⁰ A battle ensued between the followers of Haji Maula and the royal army, and after two days at Bhandarkal gate the followers of Amir Hamiu'd-Din cornered the insurgents. Haji Maula was brought down from his horse by Amir Hamiu'd-Din who disregarded all the blows that fell upon him killed the former with his own hand.

After the suppression of the insurrection, the 'Alawi⁶¹ was killed, and all those who had taken money from Haji Maula were made to disgorge the amount, and were cast in prison. The Sultan sent Ulugh Khan from Ranthambhor to punish the followers of Haji Maula. The former took up residence at Mu'izzi palace. The insurgents were severely punished, so that blood flowed like stream.⁶² The family of Malik Fakhru'd-Din, the late Kotwal of Sultan Balban's days, was completely eradicated on suspicion that without their instigation Haji Maula would not have dared to rise in rebellion.⁶³ The unfortunate sons and grandsons of the late Kotwal had no knowledge of the revolt.⁶⁴ The sons of Fakhru'd-Din Maliku'l-umara were not a party to this rebellion, but because Haji Maula was a personal slave of their father they were punished.⁶⁵ Therefore it may be safely concluded that Haji Maula in his rebellion was not supported by the descendants of Malik Fakhru'd-Din. There is no other evidence of any help being received by the rebel leader from Balbani Amirs or their descendants except that he was helped by a few disgruntled and unemployed ex-Kotwali officers. On the other hand, the insurgent leader made friends with prisoners released from the jail, and other persons who were attracted by the gold distributed by him from the royal treasury, and even shoemakers fought in his rank.⁶⁶

Haji Maula had placed a man related to Sultan Shamsu'd-Din on his mother's side on the throne, to give a legal sanction to his rebellion, but the poor 'Alawi had no knowledge of this uprising, and he was taken by force, and made to wear the crown.⁶⁷ The respectable citizens of Delhi were forced to pay their obedience to the 'Alawi, and there is no evidence in contemporary history about their voluntary support to Haji Maula nor any mention about any planned conspiracy with the support of Ilbari Turks to replace the Khaljis and revive their power. Barani clearly states that the rebellion had its root in the distress of the people due to the oppression of Kotwal Tirmidi. Therefore it is difficult to agree with some scholars who call the rebellion of Haji Maula as an attempt

of the Ilbarites to regain power.⁶⁴ The insurrection was a protest of the plebeian citizens against the tyranny of Kotwal Tirmidi.

After the suppression of this insurrection, Sultan 'Alau'd-Din, on an analysis of the causes of rebellions⁶⁵ ascribed four main reasons for the recurrence of disobedience among his subjects, viz., the Sultan's disregard and negligence of the affairs of his subjects, wine bibbing, intimacy among the Malikis, and increase of wealth which creates evil and strife, and brings forth pride and disloyalty.⁶⁶ It is interesting to note that the Sultan's ignorance of the affairs of his subjects topped the list, due perhaps to the fact that the rebellion of Haji Maula was largely a product of official oppression done behind the back of the Sultan.

III

The End of the Khalji Rule (1316-20)

After the death of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji, Malik Kafur's regency of thirty-five days over the boy Sultan Shihab-u'd-Din was put to an end by four *paiks*, who released Mubarak Khan, the future Sultan Qutbu'd-Din Mubarak Khalji, another son of the late Sultan. The foot soldiers or *paiks* were recruited from slaves or common run of people. Their loyalty to the reigning dynasty, even when the Amirs and Malikis had deserted the cause of the descendants of Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban, had induced them to join the standard of Chhaju, the nephew of Balban, when he rebelled against Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Khalji.⁶⁷ During the reign of the Khalji Sultans there are at least two instances to illustrate their attachment to the reigning monarch and his descendants.

The first occasion arose when Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji on his way to Ranthambhor Fort, in 1301, stopped at a place named Tilpat for rest.⁶⁸ The Sultan, who used to go out for hunting excursions in the neighbourhood, was attacked one day by Akat Khan, his own nephew. The Sultan had a handful of guards with him. Akat Khan had with him nearly hundred horsemen who were New Muslims, that is, newly converted Mongols, and he ordered them to shower arrows on the Sultan. The latter tried to ward off the arrows directed towards him with the help of the stool on which he was so long taking his rest. But his life was saved by the boldness of the *paik* bodyguards of the Sultan. One among them,

Manka by name, covered the Sultan by making his own body a shield against the deadly arrows directed against the Sultan. When the followers of Akat Khan came galloping towards the Sultan's unconscious person with the aim of severing his head from the body, the *paiks* surrounded their master with drawn sword and refused to give way.⁶⁹ They sent off the attackers by falsely representing that the Sultan had already breathed his last.⁷⁰ Later on the Sultan, after recovering from the swoon to which he had fallen due to excessive loss of blood, joined his camp, from where the foolish Akat Khan, who had called an informal court to announce the death of his uncle and assume the crown, had to fly for life.⁷¹

After the death of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji, Malik Kafur, his slave favourite, was trying to remove all the sons of the late Sultan. He had blinded Khizr Khan, the eldest son of the Sultan, and his full brother Shadi Khan. He had planned to do away with Mubarak Khan.⁷² While Malik Kafur was thus engaged to remove all the male members of the family of the late Sultan, some *paiks* who had the charge of Hazar Situn, decided to remove Malik Kafur and save the family of their patron. They entered the room of the regent late at night and killed him.⁷³ The name of *paiks* as given by Isami are Mubashshir, Bashir, Salah and Munir.⁷⁴ The same *paiks* brought out Mubarak Khan from his confinement and placed him in the position of Naib of Sultan Shihabu'd-Din, a minor son of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din, and the ruler in whose name Malik Kafur was directing the affairs of the state. After sometime Mubarak Khan removed the boy-Sultan from the throne, and assumed the crown himself, under the title of Sultan Qutbu'd-Din Mubarak Khalji. The *paiks* who had helped to save his life, at the risk of their own security, received their reward by losing their life under the orders of the Sultan. The reason for their punishment was their vain-glorious and arrogant attitude.⁷⁵ But the offence called for a milder punishment, specially when we remember that while the nobles of the court of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji were silent onlookers to the possible ruin of their master's family, these *paiks* took the initiative in avenging the cause of Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan⁷⁶, and saved the future Sultan Qutbu'd-Din Mubarak Khalji from the same fate.

Sultan Qutbu'd-Din Mubarak Khalji after his accession released the prisoners⁷⁷, and relaxed the vigorous regulations of the previous reign. He at the beginning of his reign gained immense popularity because the people were no longer fettered

by the regulations which said, "Do this but do not do that; say this but do not say that; hide this but do not hide that; eat this but do not eat that; sell such as this, but do not sell things like that; act like this but do not act like that."⁷⁸ Himself being a lover of pleasure, the Sultan removed the puritan atmosphere of the previous rule. Life became gay and joyous at Delhi, the more so because of the absence of the fear of Mongol invasion. The prosperity of the country was also unusually good as attested by the absence of famine.⁷⁹

But the popularity of the Sultan did not last long because of the inhuman and cruel acts which he committed as also because of his debauchery and licentiousness.⁸⁰ Naturally when the Sultan met his death at the hands of his own favourite Khusraw Khan, due to his careless foolhardiness, the people of Delhi did not raise a single hand in protest of the acts of the usurper as they had done during Khalji usurpation. The atrocities committed by him were in their nature so violent and disgusting that it destroyed even the natural inclination of the people to support the ruling dynasty. More so because Khusraw Khan belonged to the Indian faction of the court.

NOTES

1. Barani, p. 173.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
4. Ferishta, Vol. I, p. 155.
5. *Idem.*
6. According to Isami, Sultan Mu'izzu'd-Din Kaiqubad was without any food and drink for three days before he was cruelly murdered by Turkish, a Turk under the orders of Jalalu'd-Din Khalji, *Futuhu's-Salatin*, p. 200; See ante.
7. Ferishta, Vol. I, p. 156.
8. Barani, p. 182; see also Chapter II.
9. Some of the Amirs of the party of Ghiyasu'd-Din and Bhim Deb, the Raja of Kol (i.e., modern Aligarh) had joined him. Badaoni, p. 167. Yahya mentions Bhim Deo, Piram Deo Kotla, as Hindu allies of Chhaju. *T.M.S.*, pp. 63-64.

10. Arkali Khan defeated the force of Chhaju near Kalib Nagar (modern Kalibahar), Barani, p. 182. *History of the Khaljis*, p. 23, and f.n. 16.
11. Barani, p. 183.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 184.
13. Ferishta, pp. 157-58.
14. Barani, pp. 218-19.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 212.
16. Sidi Maula came to Delhi during the days of Sultan Balban and opened a *Khangah*. His charity attracted many people. Perhaps the support of Khan-i-Khanan, the eldest son of Sultan Jalalu'd-Din, accounted for his financial resources. People however ascribed to him knowledge of alchemy and natural science. He never joined the Friday prayer. Many apprehended that he wanted to seize the crown with the help of Amirs and Malikis with whom he was familiar, Barani, pp. 209-10; Ferishta, pp. 161-62; *T-i-A*, pp. 125-26; Badaoni, p. 170.
17. *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 94.
18. Barani, p. 212. According to Yabya three days afterwards a pit was dug out, in it a great fire was kindled for throwing into it the remaining adherents of the Maula. But Arkali Khan interposed on their behalf, and His Majesty showed compassion on them. *T.M.S.*, p. 67.
19. Ferishta, Vol. I, p. 161.
20. Barani, p. 186; see also Chapter II.
21. Barani, pp. 208-10; According to Prof. Hodivala "The sumptuous feasts and open house kept in the name of Sidi for the people of Delhi were a part of his propaganda and the aim and object was to secure thereby the allegiance and active support of the proletariat of the capital." See *Studies, in Indo-Muslim History*, p. 267.
22. Barani, p. 243; *Futuhu's-Salatin*, p. 233.
23. *Khaza'in* (Eng. Trans.), p. 6.
24. Barani, pp. 244-45.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
26. The early life of Chingiz Khan (1154-1227 A.D.) who welded the scattered Mongol tribes of Central Asia into a tremendous fighting machine by his organisation, leadership and war tactics and strategy, reads like a romance. In the 13th and 14th centuries the Mongol empire extended from Black Sea to China Sea and from Siberia to Indus and Siestan. Michael Prawdin, *The Mongol Empire, its Rise and Fall*, pp. 21-37.
27. Barani, p. 254.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 300-02; *Futuhu's-Salatin*, pp. 276-77. Other important Mongol invasions which were checked before they could reach the capital were as follows :—
(i) Kadar's raid in the Punjab (1297-98). See *Khaza'inu'l-Futuh* (Eng. Trans.), p. 23; Barani, p. 250.

- (ii) Saldi's expulsion from Swistan (identified with Sehwan in Sind) in 1299-1300, by Zafar Khan. See *Futuh's-Salatin*, pp. 241-42.
- (iii) Invasion of 'Ali Beg, Tartag and Targhi and their defeat at Amroha. See *Khaza'in* (Eng. Trans.), p. 26.
- (iv) Invasion of Kupak and Iqbal-mandah in 1306. *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 127.
29. *History of the Saracens*, pp. 398-99.
30. Howorth, *History of the Mongols*, Vol. I, pp. 78-91.
31. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 127-30; Hamdu'llah Mustawfi Qazwini, *Ta'rikh-i-Guzida*, Vol. I, p. 372.
32. E and D, Vol. II, p. 388.
33. Michael Prawdin, *The Mongol Empire, its Rise and Fall*, p. 60.
34. E and D, Vol. III, p. 529.
35. *Khaza'in* (Eng. Trans.), p. 26.
36. During the invasion of Qutluq Khwajah, people from the surrounding areas took shelter in the city, and there was no accommodation even in the streets and markets and mosques. Barani, p. 253.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 253-57.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 301-02. During the invasion of Targhi the Sultan for two months faced the enemy with a small force that was at his disposal. The Mongols however failed to force the entrenchment of the royal army at Siri.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 303.
41. Barani (p. 305) gives the following prices of food grains : The per man price of wheat was $7\frac{1}{2}$ *fitals*, of rice 5 *fitals*, masha 5 *fitals*, barley 4 *fitals*, gram 5 *fitals* & moth 3 *fitals*.
42. The cloth market was called Sarai-i-'Adl and was situated in the Badaon gate. The prices of cloth were as follows : Delhi Kharr—16 *tankas*, Coloured Silk—6 *tankas*, Ordinary Silk—3 *tankas*, Red Stripped Stuff—6 *fitals*, Ordinary Common Stuff— $3\frac{1}{2}$ *fitals*, Coarse—5, 3, and 2 *tankas* respectively. Fine Silabti costs 6 *tankas*, same of the ordinary quality—4 *tankas* and Coarse—2 *tankas*, Red lining of Nagore—24 *fitals*, Coarse lining—12 *fitals*. Long cloth 20 yds. or 40 yds. in a *tanka* according to fine or coarse quality and so on (*Ibid.*, p. 310).
43. Horses cost hundred to hundred and twenty *tankas* for first grade, eighty to ninety *tankas* for second grade, sixty-five to seventy *tankas* for 3rd grade, and Tattus cost ten to twenty-five *tankas* (*Ibid.*, p. 313).
- The prices of ordinary servants slave girls was 5 to 12 *tankas*, a good looking one cost 20 to 30 even 40 *tankas*. But a really beautiful slave-girl cost 200 *tankas* and even more (*Ibid.*, p. 314).
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 304-05.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 306.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 307.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 308-09.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 318-19.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 315-16.
50. *Khaza'in* (Eng. Trans.), pp. 10-11.
51. *Futuhu's-Salatin*, p. 268. Barani says that he was Superintendent of Crown Lands at Rataul. It was in Bhaghpat Tahsil, Meerut. Barani, p. 278. *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, p. 274.
52. Barani, pp. 278-79.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 280.
54. Barani calls him a grandson of Shah-i-Najaf. Badaoni has given his name as Sayyid Zada Shah Nabsa. *Muntakhabu't-twarikh*, p. 193; See *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, pp. 274-75.
55. Barani, p. 280.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 281; Ferishta, p. 188.
57. Barani, p. 281.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 282.
59. *Muntakhabu't-twarikh*, p. 194.
60. Barani, p. 282.
61. Ferishta, p. 189.
62. Barani, p. 281.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 280.
64. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* (Second Ed.), p. 52; K. S. Lal, *History of the Khaljis*, p. 118.
65. From the revolt of the new Mussalmans in Gujrat to that of Haji Maula four insurrections had followed one upon another. The three other rebellions were following :—
 - (i) The revolt of New Mussalmans or Mongols who had embraced Islam, in the expeditionary army sent to Gujrat under Ulugh Khan. *Futuhu's-Salatin*, pp. 244-45.
 - (ii) Revolt of Akat Khan—the nephew of the Sultan at Tilpat. Barani, p. 273.
 - (iii) The revolt of Mangu Khan and 'Umar Khan—the sister's son of the Sultan at Badaon. *Ibid.*, pp. 277-78.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 282-83.
67. See Chapter II.
68. Tilpat was about twelve miles from Delhi. See *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, p. 272.
69. Barani, p. 273.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 274.
71. *Ibid.*, pp. 275-76.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 373.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 374.
74. *Futuhu's-Salatin*, pp. 343-44.
75. Barani, p. 377.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 376.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 382.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 383.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 387.
80. See Chapter II.

CHAPTER V
PEOPLE AND POLITICS IN DELHI DURING
TUGHLUQ RULE

I

The Foundation of the Tughluq Dynasty

Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq (1320-25) established his dynasty by defeating Khusraw Khan in a fiercely contested battle in the suburbs of Delhi.¹ Even after his decisive victory Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq was not quite sure of his position. He tried to ascertain and appease the mind of the citizens of Delhi by a lengthy speech justifying the actions taken by him against Khusraw Khan, and expressed his unwillingness to assume the crown. In his speech he asserted that he was not prompted to take up arms for the greed of kingdom (*batam' mulk in Kar na-hardaham*, Barani, p. 422) and in his display of modesty he went to the extent of describing himself as a vagabond. Poet Amir Khusraw puts the following words in the address delivered by Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq² :—

Man budam yaki awarah

He wanted his hearers to be convinced that because he was a vagabond he had no hankering for kingdom. He said that the *raison d'être* behind his declaration of war against Khusraw Khan was to punish the offenders, to establish Islam, to liberate the land from Hindu paramountcy, and to avenge on those who had done harm to Sultan 'Alau'd-Din and his descendants.³

"I have drawn my sword", said Ghazi Malik, the future Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq, "and have taken revenge to the best of my power. 'Ye are the nobles of the state'. If ye know of any son of our patron's blood, bring him forth immediately and I will seat him on the throne, and will be the first person to tender my service and devotion. If the whole stock has been clean cut off, then do ye bring forward some worthy and proper person and raise him to the throne. I will pay my allegiance to him. I have drawn my sword to avenge my patrons not to gain power and ascend a throne."⁴

This explanation was necessary, because Ghazi Malik had worked up the religious frenzy of the provincials⁵ and declared a *jihad* against Khusraw Khan in order to win the throne. Khusraw Khan and of course earned the disapprobation of many for eradicating the male members of the 'Ala'i family, but he was perhaps unpopular with a small minority. His fall from power was not so much due to the popularity of the cause of the Khaljis, as due to the religious fervour worked up against him, in the provinces. The people of Delhi were not carried away by the cry of Islam in danger as is evident from the fact that in the army of Khusraw Khan many Muslim soldiers fought against the forces of the Ghazi. Prior to his shedding off the dress of a jihadist and appearing in public decked out in the apparel of a monarch, he gave a long explanation for his action. He suffered from the doubt natural to a founder of a new dynasty. His apparent hesitation and unwillingness to wear the crown flowed from an apprehension of which Amir Khusraw in the *Tughluqnama* has given expression through Tughluq's own statement. In reply to the request made to him for ascending the throne, Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq said, "I am not a child to be dragged by your fascinating talks to such a difficult task, without any prior consideration. If I take this kingdom conquered by myself, people will rightly think that I have not fought for religion, but for my own sake and will slander me."⁶

It was this fear of the opinion at the capital that had led him to give such a long explanation to demonstrate his sincerity towards the 'Ala'i family, and the cause of religion. The whole show it appears was a make-belief arrangement, and it is evident that the speeches were made to enlist public sympathy in favour of the new dynasty and its founder. The modesty of Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq at the time of his accession was in fact chiefly directed to hoodwink the citizens of Delhi, and to minimize the shock which the people received due to the establishment of an altogether new dynasty not related with the old royal house, and the overthrowing of a ruler of an indigenous stock. Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq was eminently successful in his attempt, because he was unanimously elected by the assembled nobles and the people of Delhi as their ruler.⁷

During the brief span of his rule Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq Shah tried his best to win the heart of his subjects by his liberality to the poor and the needy.⁸ He also made efforts to provide employment for all.⁹ The restoration of

peace and order brought confidence in his rule, and a sense of security in the minds of his subjects. But on his return journey from Bengal expedition he met his death due to the fall of a hastily erected pavilion at Afghanpur constructed for his reception by Ulugh Khan, the future Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq.

II

The Reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325-51)

The sudden death of the Sultan at Afghanpur due to the fall of the pavilion created strong suspicion on Ulugh Khan¹⁰, and therefore prior to his accession he scattered gold and gold *tankas* among the people in order to win them over. Barani says that at Delhi gold and silver coins were distributed by him in every lane. "*Tankaha-i-zar wa nuqrah musht musht dar kuchaha barizand*).¹¹ Domes were erected in the city and the markets and the lanes were decorated. From the time that the Sultan reached the city till he entered the palace, he distributed gold and silver, to appease the people. It reminds us of the days of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji who tried to wash away his crime by scattering gold and silver among his subjects. A strong suspicion of parricide dogged the steps of the Sultan as he ascended the throne four days after the death of his father, and he took steps to pacify the citizens of Delhi by his distribution of wealth among them.

After his accession Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq gradually lost the support of a large section of the people. The Amirs disliked his policy of patronising men like 'Aziz Himar and Shaikh Babu Naik.¹² The 'Ulama and Mashaikha disliked his policy of excluding them from all state affairs¹³, and the people were obviously affected and naturally did not appreciate his schemes and plans. In fact, the Sultan was out of sympathy with his age and his people. His approach to any question of state policy was never modified by human consideration. He never showed any mercy to the people who could not see eye to eye with him.¹⁴ The citizens of the capital were affected and naturally did not appreciate his actions.¹⁵

According to Ibn Battuta, the citizens of Delhi who were much disgusted with his reprehensible acts used to post anonymous letters addressed to the Sultan. Through these letters which contained much criticism of the Sultan and his activities the public opinion of Delhi expressed itself. In

order that the letters might reach the Sultan's hand they used to write on the cover: "By the Head of His Majesty, none except he should read the letter." These abusive letters were usually thrown in the council hall in the course of night.¹⁶

The Sultan, distrustful of his subjects at Delhi, decided to remove the capital.¹⁷ 'Isami also ascribes the creation of the new capital to the emperor's distrust of the inhabitants of Delhi. According to the same author the people of Delhi were ordered to leave the city with bag and baggage within a month. Ladies who had never seen the light of the day, religious men who knew nothing except their daily prayer, the wealthy who had accumulated much wealth, all were ordered to leave the city.¹⁸

There is no reason to disbelieve the emperor's distrust of the citizens of Delhi, most probably due to their critical attitude towards his acts, as suggested by 'Isami and the Moorish traveller. According to Barani, however, Deogir which was renamed Daulatabad was made capital because it was more centrally situated and was equidistant from the different parts of the empire, viz., Delhi, Gujrat, Lakhnawati, Satgaon, Sunargaon, Tilang, Ma'bar, Dwarsamudra, and Kampila.¹⁹

The rebellions and disorders of the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq increased in number in the latter part of his reign, and the early years of his rule had passed in comparative peace. The Sultan, therefore, had no reason to think about making a serious departure from the tradition of nearly two centuries of Muslim rule in India by establishing a new capital in 1327²⁰, if not for doing something novel. The idea that Daulatabad occupied a more central position than Delhi came to the Sultan perhaps as an afterthought²¹, that is, after he had lost faith in the people of the city and decided to leave it. The Sultan, most probably, could not stand the critical attitude of the citizens of Delhi towards his activities.

All other causes ascribed for the scheme of a new capital at Daulatabad appear to be based on slender grounds. The establishment of friendly relations with Transoxiana, or the pressing need for a more centrally situated capital on account of the difficulties of communication, or the reduction of the Doab into a place of secondary importance, and the recession of the fear of the Mongol invasion²², have been pointed out as the causes of the new capital. The establishment of friendly relation with Transoxiana²³, or the elimination of Mongol danger gave Delhi a security and peace which she had not

enjoyed for a long time. Moreover, the Sultan's plan for the Khorasan expedition, which he seemed to have nourished after the departure of Tarmashirin, enhanced the importance of Delhi as a strategic point nearer to the destination of his projected expedition. As in the early years all the parts of the empire of Delhi were well connected, there was no pressing need either for a more centrally situated capital or for any change of the old order of things. The importance of other parts of the empire did not overlap that of the Doab, and in the 14th century its economic and political importance cannot be overestimated, and the subsequent decision of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq to abandon his scheme²⁴ was largely due to the great importance of keeping the Doab under control. Thus Doab did not lose its importance in any period of mediaeval history.

The idea of making Daulatabad the capital may easily have flowed from the Sultan's disgust of the citizens of Delhi. The whole scheme perhaps would not otherwise have matured in his imagination. It would have been a height of folly on his part to carry those very people of Delhi whom he disliked to Daulatabad to create disturbance there anew. The story of ordering all the inhabitants to leave their hearth and home²⁵, and of a blind and a crippled man being dragged to Daulatabad²⁶, or of the burning of the city need not be taken seriously. Barani says that this scheme of the Sultan was ruinous for the capital and distressing for the chief men of the country. The city which rivalled Baghdad in splendour was destroyed so completely that not a cat or dog was left among the buildings of the city, in its palaces or in its suburbs. The people who for many years and for generations had been natives and inhabitants of the land were broken-hearted. 'Isami echoes the same sentiment about the dislike of the people to leave their home for a distant land. Herein lay the real grievance of the people for their trek to the south. If we accept the statement of Barani²⁷, shorn of its rhetorical hyperbole about not a cat or dog being left in the city, we can easily reach the bottom of the story about the wholesale removal of the inhabitants of Delhi.

In fact, it was only the principal men, belonging to the upper class, and troops²⁸ together with their wives and dependants who were removed from the capital. Who were these chief men and prominent citizens of the day? It must have included the Amirs and Maliks, the upper strata of the society that always accompany a court. The removal of the head-

quarters from Delhi was done by stages. In the first instance the Queen-mother Makhduma-i-Jahan along with the entire royal family, the Amirs and Maliks, notables and renowned persons, attendants, slaves and elephants, horses, the treasury and the hidden wealth of the emperor went to Daulatabad. Afterwards the princes, prelates and the chief men of Delhi were ordered to proceed to the new capital.²⁹ Later on however there was an *en masse* removal to Daulatabad and "the doors of the city was shut for days together".³⁰

The *en masse* removal of the inhabitants, and the total ruin of the capital has been belied by the description of the grandeur of the city by Ibn Battuta himself, when he visited it personally in the year 1334.³¹ Therefore these exaggerations need not be believed at all. During the rebellion of Baharam Aibak the Sultan was at Daulatabad. After receiving the news of the revolt he came to Delhi, collected an army and marched against the rebels who were crushed by him.³² Had Delhi been completely evacuated, how could the Sultan gain new recruits for his army? The construction of the new city of Jahanpanah in the year 727 A.H.³³ proves that the Sultan was expanding the city in the very same year he was said to have destroyed it.

The fact of the matter is that the Sultan removed from the capital all those connected with the court, as also a major portion of his army. The people, that is, the common masses whom Yahya calls *Mardum-i-'awam wa awbash*, the multitude of ordinary, common people belonging to the lowest strata of society must have remained in the city. The *karkhanas*³⁴ which produced cloth and other sundry articles, and of which the Masalik gives a description, were not removed from the city, because the description comes from the accounts of Shiabu'd-Din Ahmad who belongs to a period after the so-called removal of the citizens of Delhi to Deogir. Only a part of its population including mostly men of the upper strata, their dependants, and relations and families and a part of the royal army and the family and dependants of the soldiers, and a section of the traders and merchants, as also the wealthier classes went to Daulatabad.³⁵

The transfer of the imperial seat from Delhi to Deogir could not have been done by dragging people behind the tail of the horse as the Moorish traveller would have us believe. It was impossible for the Sultan, even if he wanted to impose unfavourable conditions for the journey to Daulatabad, in face of the dislike of the people to proceed there. Elaborate

arrangements were made for a comfortable journey from Delhi to Daulatabad. A chain of *dhawa*, that is to say, *paihs* or runners as guards was posted, along the whole road from Delhi to Deogir. At each stage, a palace and a monastery were built with a Shaikh attached to each. They used to keep in readiness food and drink and betel leaf and all provisions for hospitality. Guides were stationed with orders to see that travellers suffered no annoyance. The traces of these remained for many years.³⁶ Various inducements were given to the people to go to the new capital³⁷, and Yahya states that the houses of the people were purchased and owners were paid from the treasury.³⁸ Barani stated that all along Deogir there sprang up grave-yards of Muslims, and out of the multitude of emigrants few survived.³⁹ But the new capital, as is evident from 'Isami's statement, owed its growth and development to the emigrants, and therefore the people who had migrated from Delhi could not have suffered very much either on the way or when they reached the new capital.⁴⁰

The Sultan himself, however, admitted the failure of his scheme and gave permission to all the citizens to return to Delhi. But his experiment in capital-making had earned for him the disapprobation of the people who did not like to leave their hearth and home; in fact, no one likes the idea of leaving his own native place where he is brought up for generations. The transfer of the imperial seat had not only cost an immense expenditure from the treasury, it shook the confidence of the people in the Sultan who in order to vent his wrath on the citizens of Delhi had attempted in vain to break the age-old tradition of the Sultanate, much to the dislike of the people.

The most serious and incurable disease, says Barani, from which a kingdom can never recover is when the high and the low look down upon the ruler and lose confidence in the king.⁴¹ One of the chief causes which contributed to the failure of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq to retain the confidence of his subjects was the experiment that he made by his attempt to create a new capital at Deogir, thus staying away from Delhi.⁴² Yahya rightly points out that "from those quarters that formerly arrested the growth of insurrection, there now appeared outbreak of sedition".⁴³ The Sultan's policy of adopting punitive measures against the citizens of Delhi went a large way in inciting popular discontent against him, and in helping the growth of a rebellious spirit. The transfer of the capital undertaken by the Sultan without any consultation and prior consideration⁴⁴ against the will of the

citizens of Delhi, without carefully weighing its advantages and disadvantages, was a political blunder which undermined the foundation of his kingdom.⁴³

III

Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq (1351-86)

Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq breathed his last at Sind whither he had gone to suppress a formidable rebellion led by Taghi, a former slave, and the Delhi forces, after the death of the Sultan, were attacked in the rear by the Sindhians and in front by the Mongols who were employed by the late Sultan. Thus the Delhi forces were placed in a quagmire.⁴⁴ After two days of confusion, the Amirs and Maliks placed Firuz Tughluq, a cousin of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, on the throne. The election was acclaimed by all except Khudawandzada⁴⁵, the daughter of Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq, who pleaded in favour of her son Dawar Malik. She was told to her face that the time and the situation demanded a competent man to save the army from annihilation. This expectation was fulfilled by Firuz who restored order in the camp, drove off the Mongols and the Sindhians and safely took the army out of the danger in which it was placed.

At Delhi however Khwaja-i-Jahan Ahmad Ayaz, Wazir, had placed a son of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq on the throne. Contemporary historians however deny the existence of any son of the late Sultan.⁴⁶ A further evidence in favour of this view is indirectly provided by the reaction of the people of Delhi in the situation. Khwaja-i-Jahan had assembled a large force at Delhi. In order to win the people of the city in his favour he had also distributed a large sum among the populace. His profusion attracted crowds from all directions, but it was a curious fact that while they accepted the Khwaja's bounty their hopes and prayers were in favour of Firuz Shah.⁴⁷ Firuz's march to Delhi was one of triumphal procession in which people from all parts from Dipalpur, Multan and Sarasati joined him; the bankers and merchants gave him a loan of several lakhs of *tankas*, and the Na'ib Wazir Qawamu'l-Mulk Malik Maqbul joined him after deserting the Khwaja.⁴⁸ Everyone seems to have favoured Firuz Tughluq though neither like Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji, nor like his cousin he could induce them to do so by distributing largesses. On the other hand, Khwaja-i-Jahan had the treasury at his disposal and could give

away much wealth to those that sympathised with him. Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq had to contract loans and his army was a battered one, yet he was favoured by all sections of people and Khwaja-i-Jahan ultimately had to give up all idea of resisting him.

The favour shown by Delhi to Sultan Firuz Tughluq is quite in contrast with the hostility shown by the city towards Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Khalji or the grudging allegiance paid to his nephew. It is because Sultan Firuz was no usurper like the formers. Had he been so the people of Delhi would not have favoured him voluntarily.⁵¹

Sultan Firuz Tughluq also had a great faith in the sense of honour of the people of Delhi. He knew that the citizens of the capital would not tolerate any unjust or cowardly act. An illustration of the Sultan's effort to register the opinion of the people of Delhi in enforcing discipline in the army comes from his novel method of checking desertions in his expeditionary force led against the Sindhians for avenging earlier humiliation. The army of the Sultan consisted of 9,000 horses, 408 elephants and a fleet of five thousand boats.⁵² Scarcity of grain led to the rise of prices and the Sultan in his engagement with the army of Thatta could not gain any fruitful result.⁵³ A decision to retreat to Gujrat in order to refit the army was taken. On the return journey the guide misled the army into the Ran of Kutch. Scarcity of food grains and salty water took heavy toll of men and horses and it was with great difficulty that the Sultan reached Gujrat.⁵⁴ The Sultan spent the whole revenue of Gujrat of that year⁵⁵, nearly two crores, for refitting his army and requisitioned provisions and arms from the capital.⁵⁶ His second descent upon Thatta took the Sindhians by surprise who had to give up their agriculture and to take shelter in their mud forts. The siege continued for a long while and an outbreak of famine ultimately reduced the Jam to submission⁵⁷, not however before another reinforcement had arrived from Delhi.⁵⁸ During his second descent upon Thatta many of his men who had gone through the hardship of the first campaign went off with their outfits to their home. On being appraised of this situation the Sultan consulted his officers who advised him to appoint guards to prevent desertion. The Sultan rejected their advice and said, "If God wills that I should conquer Thatta, the presence of these men is unnecessary; but if I am to fail what can they do? But ultimately he had to issue orders to Khan-i-Jahan at Delhi to apprehend the deserters from Thatta to Delhi. He how-

ever directed his deputy at the capital to look only for those who had been regularly retained in the army, and received pay from the State. The irregulars were therefore overlooked.

After apprehending them the Khan was directed to inflict upon them a novel punishment. They were not to be subjected to *Tadaruk-i-Khusrawai*, which signified execution, banishment or amercement. The Sultan directed that these deserters were to be subjected to *Tadaruk-i-Ma' nawai* or moral remedy which implied that an offender was to be exposed to public reproach. Thus Sultan Firuz Shah in his direction asked his officers at the capital to adopt a method of punishment by which a deserter was exposed to public gaze. This was also in accordance with religious precepts.⁵⁹

In obedience to the Sultan's order, Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul directed his officers to apprehend everyone who had returned from the army. If, after due enquiry, a man proved to be a regular retainer, he was subjected to *Tadaruk-i-Ma' nawai*. Such notorious offenders were exposed in the bazar for a day or two to the gaze of all men, and were then set free without further chastisement and without their villages or pay being touched.⁶⁰ Public opinion and its reprobation were evidently considered to be a more effective punishment than infliction of capital punishment. Sultan Firuz Tughluq, at least, considered the method of exposing deserters from the army in the people's eye a more effective weapon to check further desertion than appointing sentinels to check desertion or inflicting punishment. That the state had to seek co-operation from the people in its routine activities proves the weight of the opinion of the citizens of the metropolis.

Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq made the laws of the Prophet his guide, and abolished all demands inconsistent with the law. He abolished many unlawful taxes even at a loss of revenue.⁶¹ But in order to enforce the injunction of the law he also introduced a new tax, and extended the scope of an old one. The new tax was an irrigation cess of ten per cent called *Haqq-i-Sharab* from the produce of the fields⁶², irrigated by canals. This tax was imposed after due consultation with the Jurists who on another occasion also approved of the Sultan's intention to include the Brahmins within the scope of the *jizyah*.⁶³

The *jizyah* or poll tax had never been imposed upon the Brahmins and in the former reigns they had been excused and exempted from paying this tax. But Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq convened a meeting of the learned men and suggested to them that an error had been committed in holding the

Brahmins exempt from the tax, and that the revenue officers had been remiss in their duties. The Brahmins on whom the Hindus depended ought to be taxed first. The learned lawyers agreed with the Sultan, and said that the *jizyah* should be imposed upon the Brahmins.⁶⁴

All the Brahmins of the capital then assembled and went to Kushk-i-Shikar where the Sultan was engaged in looking after the construction work. The Brahmins made representation to the Sultan that they were never before called upon to pay the *jizyah*, and they wanted to know why they were now subjected to it. They were determined to collect wood and to burn themselves under the walls of the palace rather than pay the tax.⁶⁵ Sir Wolseley Haig remarks that "This is an extreme example of the practice of *dharma*, so common at one time in India that it was found necessary to make it an offence under the penal code."⁶⁶ But we should bear in mind that the Brahmins in this case had no desire of renouncing this world for salvation in the other, and of entering the fire to sacrifice their life for their disgust with this world. A similar instance of death by burning for the sake of honour is available in one of the messages of the Shahi King Jaipal to Subuktigin, in which the Hindu ruler declared that "In affairs of honour and renown we would place ourselves upon the fire like roast meat, and upon the dagger like sunrays." In extreme distress, the message continued, "We shall throw all that pertain unto us, our riches and our possessions alive and dead, and destroy them, and afterwards kill ourselves, so that nothing but dust and ash will remain." Jaipal acted up to this spirit, and when after his defeat and imprisonment he was released by Sultan Mahmud he burnt himself to death.⁶⁷ The Brahmins in this case however did not resort to burning themselves to death as they had threatened. The Sultan had taken a firm stand and when he was reported about the decisions of the Brahmins, he looked sharply and replied that they might burn and destroy themselves at once for they would not escape from the payment of the *jizyah*. He would not overlook the matter as former kings had done, and they must give up all hope of escaping from the tax.

Failing to change the decision of the Sultan by their threats, the Brahmins went on 'hunger strike' for several days at the palace until they were on the point of death. The resort to hunger strike as a form of protest (*prayapavesh* or sitting down for a solemn fast) has been mentioned by Kalhana, the historian of Kashmir, as a weapon of the weak against the

strong. It was used as a powerful political weapon by individuals or groups for redress of a grievance, or against an obnoxious measure.⁶⁸ The aim of hunger strike was to remove gross injustice and to draw attention to an evil. The Brahmins of Delhi had failed to change the mind of the Sultan, but they were able to draw the attention of the Hindus of the city. The latter assembled together and told the Brahmins that it was not right for them to kill themselves on account of the *jizyah*. Men belonging to other casts undertook to pay the *jizyah* for the Brahmins.

At Delhi the *jizyah* was of three grades. The highest being a charge of forty *tankas*, the next rate was twenty *tankas*, and the lowest rate was ten *tankas*. The orthodox Sultan ultimately agreed to lower down the rate of *jizyah* for the Brahmins. He decided to charge ten *tankas* and fifty *jitals* per individual from the Brahmins.⁶⁹ Although Afif, the royal historian, says that this lowering of the rate was the outcome of the mercy of the Sultan who was approached by the Brahmins after they had given up all hopes of the abolition of *jizyah*⁷⁰, yet we should bear in mind that this mercy itself was the outcome of the commotion created by the fasting of the Brahmins. The nature of concession made to the Brahmins may be well understood when we remember that by agreeing to charge all the Brahmins a low rate of *jizyah*⁷¹ the Sultan made a serious departure from the principle underlying the division of different rate of charges in *jizyah*. There were three grades in *jizyah*, one for the rich, one for the middle class, and another for the poor. Thus this division was made on the basis of wealth and not of birth.⁷² Surely all the Brahmins in the days of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq were not poor, and the Sultan did not treat them as such when he first imposed the *jizyah*. It was the fasting of the Brahmins and the commotion created by it among the Hindus of Delhi that led to a general reduction of rates for them. A concession such as this from the hands of an orthodox ruler like Firuz Shah Tughluq should be considered to be a victory of the movement started by the Brahmins and by their co-religionists at Delhi. Though the movement failed in its primary object of abolishing *jizyah* imposed on the Brahmins yet it achieved a partial success in reducing the rates.

Another report of oppression by officials on merchants and redress gained by them by united movement comes also from Shamsi Siraj Afif. The officials at Delhi used to subject merchants both native and stranger to various kinds of vexa-

tion and merchandise that had paid regular *Zakat* were subjected to an unlawful impost of one *dang* per *tanha*. There were other imposts in Delhi not approved by the law.⁷² Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq abolished all these and many other taxes not recognised by the law. But the Sultan's notice to official rapacity and illegal gratifications was first drawn by the merchants who were forced to lend their beasts of burden for carrying bricks from old fortifications to Firuzabad. When traders, native or foreign, brought grain, salt, sugar or other goods into Delhi, the custom officers used to seize the animals that carried the merchandise of the traders and send them to old Delhi to carry bricks from the old fortifications (Hisar)⁷³ built by famous sovereigns. These buildings were failing into decay, and they furnished an inexhaustible supply of bricks. The traders' animals were sent to these places by the government officials and had to carry on load of brick to Firuzabad. The distance between old Delhi and Firuzabad was five *kos*⁷⁴ and no merchant was allowed to depart until his animals had carried one load of bricks from this distance. This made traders reluctant to come to the city and consequently grain and salt began to grow dear⁷⁵ as a result of the natural operation of the law of demand and supply. But this was not the only cause of offence given to the traders. Another typical example of the way in which employees in the Custom Department used to cause loss to the traders is apparent from the following individual case of a trader who had brought three *mans* of cotton to the city. It was detained by the customs officers who would not accept the paltry sum of three *dangs* offered by the trader as their gratification. While thus retained, the cotton unfortunately caught fire and was destroyed. Thus a serious loss was caused to the owner of goods through official negligence.⁷⁷

In protest against such and similar other oppression of officials, the merchants stayed away from the city, to avoid forced labour and vexation. As a result the supply of many goods of daily use to Delhi from outside was stopped. The city which mainly depended for food grains and other daily necessities of life upon its surrounding territories suffered due to the staying away of the merchants. As the traders stopped supplies to the city, commodities became scarce and prices rose high.⁷⁸ It is however quite possible that some took advantage of the scarcity of goods to raise prices, because the shopkeepers and traders of Delhi had no reputation for honesty. As the situation grew serious the Sultan was appraised of the cause

of the rise of the prices and he removed the grievances of the traders and abolished all illegal imposts and taxes.

The merchants of Delhi by staying away from the capital for sometime had brought matters to a crisis. It was the rise of the prices, and the consequent distress that drew the attention of the Sultan to illegal imposts and taxes. The united protest of the merchants, native as well as foreign, seems to have led to the abolition of the unlawful exactions hitherto taken from the people.⁷⁹

The last days of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq saw the beginning of the end of the dynasty, and within ten years of the death of the last of the great Tughluq the kingdom was ravaged by the invasion of Amir Timur. Throughout this period of confusion the people of Delhi favoured the process of law and order. Sultan Firuz in his old age had entrusted the affairs of the government in the hands of the Wazir Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul.⁸⁰ The rivalry between the Wazir and Prince Muhammad Khan however resulted in the death of the former, and in the appointment of the latter as a regent. But within a short period the prince made himself so very unpopular that there was an uprising of the Firuz Shahi slaves at Delhi. A sort of civil war started in the city on the third day of which the old Sultan was brought out from the palace by the insurgents.⁸¹ This turned the scale in favour of the rebels because as soon as the eyes of the soldiers and elephant drivers fell upon their former master they deserted the prince who was forced to fly for life. Although the uprising at Delhi against Prince Muhammad was mainly the work of the Firuz Shahi slaves, the reason of the discomfiture of the Prince was not the strength of those that opposed him with force. It was the popularity of the old Sultan with his subjects that accounted for the defeat of the Prince.

IV

Successors of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq

After the flight of Prince Muhammad Khan, the affairs of the government was entrusted to Prince Tughluq Shah, a grandson of the old Sultan who breathed his last on September 20, 1388. The former ascended the throne after Sultan Firuz's death under the title of Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq Shah II. But after a brief rule of five months he was replaced on the throne by Abu Bakar Shah, another grandson of Sultan Firuz.⁸² Sultan

Abu Bakar had a serious rival in Muhammad Shah, son of Sultan Firuz Tughluq. Sultan Muhammad was joined by several Amirs and Malikis and he came from Samana with his adherents to occupy Delhi. But his attempts to do so, between April, 1389 to January, 1390, were thrice frustrated by Sultan Abu Bakar Shah.

In spite of his repeated defeat at the hands of Abu Bakar Shah, Sultan Muhammad Shah was ultimately able to gain the throne of Delhi, largely due to the co-operation that he received from the people of Delhi. In April, 1390 Sultan Abu Bakar Shah had proceeded against Jalesar⁸², the place of retreat of his rival. Sultan Muhammad Shah being informed of this left his baggage at Jalesar and entered Delhi with 4,000 horses. According to Yahya all the people of the city high and low joined him.⁸⁴ Badaoni states that when Sultan Muhammad reached Delhi "the populace both great and small declared in favour of him". But Abu Bakar Shah returned immediately and surprised his uncle who fled to his original abode. The position of Sultan Abu Bakar Shah at Delhi however was weakened because although Sultan Muhammad Shah was no longer able to stand against him still the soldiery and people were very ill-disposed towards Abu Bakar Shah.⁸⁵ Some of the slaves of the Firuzshahi party opened secret correspondence with Muhammad Shah and this news unnerved Abu Bakar who fled to the Kotlah⁸⁶ of Bahadur Nahir in Mewat. The fugitive was hotly pursued, and ultimately after a short siege at the Kotlah both Abu Bakar and his host were imprisoned. The former died a prisoner, but the latter was released.

Amidst the confusing story of marches and counter-marches of rival armies, it becomes clear that the success of Sultan Muhammad was largely due to his partisans, and sympathisers at the city, and although some of the Firuzshahi slaves favoured him, the Sultan was actually against the disorder created by them in the realm. He drew the sympathy of the people perhaps because he stood for law and order as against the confusion of the days of Sultan Abu Bakar Shah. Sultan Muhammad Shah during the early days of his life had lost power by his love of pleasure and negligence of state affairs, but now after long years of exile and repeated reverses he had learned to change his ways. He tried, therefore, to restore order in the kingdom by putting down all those likely to disturb it.⁸⁷ His death on 20th January, 1394 was followed after 40 days by that

of his second son Humayun Khan who had ascended the throne under the title of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Sikandar Shah.⁸⁸

Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Mahmud Shah, the youngest son of Sultan Muhammad Shah, who succeeded his brother⁸⁹, never wielded any real power. Some dissatisfied nobles at court under the leadership of Sa'adat Khan set up Nusrat Khan, another grandson of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq, on the throne at Firuzabad.⁹⁰ Thus there were two Sultans, one at Delhi and another at Firuzabad. Daily battles were fought between these two kings who were like two kings in the game of chess. Sultan Nusrat Shah retained possession of Doab, Sambal, Panipath, Rohtak and Jahjar, while a few old ruined forts such as Dihli and Siri and the rest remained in the possession of Mahmud.⁹¹ This state of things continued for three years. Well has Nizamu'd-Din Ahmad pointed out that "Destruction seizes a land that has two kings."⁹² Under the circumstances, the Amirs and Maliks became the real rulers of the country.⁹³ On such a divided kingdom fell the news of the approach of Pir Muhammad with the vanguard of the mighty Mongol horde of his grandfather Amir Timur.

The forces of Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Shah commanded by Mallu Iqbal were scattered by Timur's army near Firuzabad. The Sultan fled to Gujrat leaving behind his own family.⁹⁴ After the city was conquered Timur's soldiers put the capital to plunder. The people of Delhi resented the indiscriminate looting carried out by the invading forces, and offered resistance. Timur in his autobiography makes the following comment on the resistance made by the citizens of Delhi, to suppress which he had to employ his soldiers :

"It had come to my knowledge that great number of Hindus and gabers with their wives and children and goods and valuables had come into the city from all the country around, and consequently I had sent some Amirs with their regiments (Kushun) into the city and directed them to pay no attention to the remonstrances of the inhabitants, but to seize and bring about these fugitives. For these several reasons a great number of Turki soldiers were in the city. When soldiers proceeded to apprehend the Hindus and gabers who had fled into the city many of them drew their swords and offered resistance. The flames of strife were thus lighted and spread through the whole city from Jahanpanah and Siri to old Delhi burning up all it reached. The savage Turks fell to killing and plundering. The Hindus set fire to their house with their own hands, burnt their wives and children in them,

and rushed into fight and were killed. The Hindus and gabers of the city showed much alacrity and boldness in fighting." Again, Amir Timur remarks about the event of the following day, that "it was brought to my knowledge that a great number of infidel Hindus had assembled in the Masjid-i-Jami' of old Delhi, carrying with them arms and provisions, and were preparing to defend themselves. Some of my people who had gone that way on business were wounded by them. I immediately ordered Amir Shah Malik and 'Ali Sultan Towachi to take a party of men and proceed to clear the house of God from infidels and idolaters. They accordingly attacked these infidels and put them to death."⁸⁸

It appears that the assemblage at the Jami' Mosque did not consist merely of Hindu unbelievers but also of Muslims because it was natural for the latter to rush to the Masjid and assemble there at times of danger. We should bear in mind, in this connection, the fact that during Amir Timur's invasion the inhabitants of this country Hindus and Muslims alike suffered equally.⁸⁹ But had the efficiency of the Delhi army not declined through mismanagement and incapacity of the later Tughluqs, it would have been very difficult if not impossible for even such a formidable enemy like Amir Timur to gain the laurels of victory with ease. The resistance of the Hindus and Muslims alike at Delhi proved the amount of support that the masses were ready to give even to a tottering and worthless government in face of an invasion from foreign land.

V

Conclusion

Delhi throughout its history in the middle ages was a city which showed a remarkably critical attitude to all changes on the political chess board. The masses of people including the plebeians of the city were not always mere spectators to the oppression and exploitation of the Sultan or the ruling caste including the Amirs and Maliks. Allowing for limitations that hedged all mediaeval thought and action, the people of Delhi showed much greater propensity to politics than many of us are ready to concede to them. Against baronical anarchy they helped the ruler, against oppressive officials and taxation they raised their voice, and against foreign hordes they fought bravely. The city was loved by its citizens, as the Athenians loved their own city. The metropolis of India, Delhi also, had

become the hope of all civilized world in the East, against raids of the Mongol barbarians. It was a shelter for the learned, a paradise for the traders, and a city that earned for itself the name of Hazrat-i-Dihli. The capital owed its greatness to an industrious people who throughout all political ups and downs retained their spirit of resistance to evils, to a considerable extent.

NOTES

1. Barani, p. 418. The site of contest was Lahrawai which lay somewhere between Hauz-i-'Ala'i and Delhi.
2. *Tughluqnama* (Aurangabad Text), p. 186. Amir Khusraw being a court poet could not have fabricated such a description of the monarch even for poetic embellishment.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 140-41.
4. Barani, pp. 421-22; F. and D., Vol. III, p. 228.
5. As has been shown above Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq in his appeal for help secured voluntary support only from Malik Bahram Aibah. The provincials however helped him in procuring the help of other governors forcibly, and two Amirs, Mughlati of Multan and Yak-lakhi of Samana, were killed by their subordinates for their refusal to co-operate with Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq. See Chapter II.
6. *Tughluqnama*, p. 142.
7. Barani, p. 429.
8. *Futuh'us-Salatin*, p. 388.
9. Barani, pp. 435-86.
10. According to Barani (p. 452), the fall of the pavilion was due to a thunderbolt from heaven. Yaliya bin Ahmad (*T.M.S.*, p. 96) ascribes the death of the Sultan to divine preordination, and Ferishta also believed in the statement of Haji Muhammad Qandhari to the effect that the structure at Afghanpur was brought down by lightning (Ferishta, Vol. I, p. 235). But 'Isami (*Futuh*, p. 407), and Nizamu'd-Din Ahmed (*T-i-A.*, pp. 197-98), as also Bada'uni (*Mantakhabu't-Twarikh*, pp. 224-25) confirm the suspicion of parricide by Ulugh Khan. Ibn Battuta also charges the Sultan with the murder of his father (*Rehla*, p. 54). Dr. Husain, in his *Rise and Fall of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq*, however, releases him of this charge (pp. 66-74). According to Dr. Husain the popularity of Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq, the character of Ulugh Khan and the lack of motive of the latter who as he is apparent was sure of succeeding his father to the throne precludes all

possibility of murder. But this view is based on slender argument because Nizamu'd-Din Ahmad has rightly pointed out that Barani did not mention this event due to deference to Firuz Tughluq, the reigning monarch. Instances of rebellion of heir apparents are not lacking in Indian History. Again the cruelty exhibited by Ulugh Khan when he ascended the throne as Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq reveals a nature quite capable of engineering a cruel death of his father.

11. Barani, p. 456.
12. See Chapter II.
13. Ibn Battuta relates an interesting incident of the imprisonment of a jurist named Afisu'd-Din. As famine relief measure the Sultan had excavated some wells outside the capital, and advanced seeds and money for cultivation. Jurist Afisu'd-Din when he heard of this said such a measure would be of no avail. This was reported to the Sultan who imprisoned the jurist saying, "Why do you meddle with the affairs of the state?" (*Rehla*, pp. 88-89). This event is significant, because it clearly shows the cause of the Sultan's dislike of the 'Ulama who often tried to interfere in politics.
14. Barani, p. 511.
15. Barani, pp. 473-78, mentions six projects of the Sultan which were actually live :
 - (i) Enhancement of taxes in the Doab ;
 - (ii) Creation of a capital at Deogir ;
 - (iii) Issuing of copper currency ;
 - (iv) Expedition to Khurasan and raising of an army for it. The expedition was never undertaken and the army was disbanded after being maintained for a year. The Sultan tried in vain to register the services of Shaikh Nasiru'd-Din Mahmud Chiragh-i-Dihli for this expedition. See *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XX, 1946 ;
 - (v) Expedition to Qarajal.
 Ferishta (Vol. I, pp. 239-40) gives the name of the commander of the last expedition as Khusraw Malik, and erroneously states that the aim of the Sultan was to conquer China and Qarajal situated in between China and Tibet. *T-i-A* (p. 204) states that the Sultan wanted to conquer Himachal region. The expedition failed immeasurably and only a few escaped destruction (*Rehla*, p. 98).
16. Ibn Battuta based his account from hearsay because in 1327 he was not in India and therefore the causes ascribed by him for the transfer of the capital are considered unreliable by many scholars. See Ishwari Prasad, *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 107n. But Isami, a contemporary writer, indirectly lends support to Ibn Battuta's account when he ascribes the Sultan's distrust of the citizens of Delhi as the cause of the transfer of the capital.
17. *Rehla*, p. 94.
18. *Futuh*, p. 430.
19. Barani, p. 473.

20. *T.M.S.*, pp. 98-99; *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 140.
21. Ferishta states that an earlier suggestion for making Ujjain the capital was rejected. Ferishta, Vol. I, p. 242.
22. *Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq*, p. 123.
23. The raid of Tarmashirin the Mongol took place according to Ferishta in 727 A.H. But Yahya places it in 729 A.H. Ferishta's date appears to be probable. Ferishta, Vol. I, p. 238; *T.M.S.*, p. 100; *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 143.
24. Barani, p. 481; Moreland, *Agrarian System of Muslim India*, p. 49. This event took place in 1337.
25. *Futuhu's-Salatin*, p. 430.
26. *Rehla*, p. 94.
27. Barani, pp. 473-74.
28. Delhi was not denuded of troops as no important city could be left without troops in those days. In the end of the year 727 A.H., the 'Ariz-i-Lashkar Malik Bahadur Gurshasab rebelled and was defeated by Khwaja-i-Jalian who was sent against him. The 'Ariz was later made a prisoner by the Hindus who delivered him to the court. *T.M.S.*, p. 99.
29. *Idem*.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
31. See Chapter III.
32. Barani, p. 478.
33. *Rehla*, pp. 25-26; A. M. Husain, *Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq*, p. 118. Many Hindus specially those in the service of the government must have gone to the new capital. We know that many of the *paikes* and bodyguards of the Sultan, like Manka paik who saved the life of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji, and Rai Bheron who saved the life of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq were Hindus. Hindu soldiers were in the employ of the Sultans from the early days of Turkish rule in India. Afif, pp. 100-04; *Tarikh-i-Baihaqi*, pp. 503-04. It would be wrong therefore to conclude with Dr. Husain that "the Hindus remained in Delhi throughout in full strength."
34. See Chapter VI.
35. The merchants and traders always thronged round the court for business and trade; for instance they went to Kilughari when Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Khalji held his court at that place.
36. Badaoni, p. 226; Ranking translation, p. 302; Ferishta Vol. I, p. 242.
37. Barani, p. 474.
38. *T.M.S.*, p. 102.
39. Barani, p. 474.
40. *Futuh*, pp. 439-40.
41. Barani, p. 522.
42. According to Badaoni, the other causes of his failure were the following :—
(a) Raid and rapine of Tarmashirin the Mongol, (b) Increase of

taxes in Doab, (c) Famine, (d) Himachal expedition, (e) Rebellions and (f) his bloodthirsty methods.—*Muntakhabu't-Twasikh*, pp. 237-38.

Yahiya gives the following as the causes of the failure of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq :—

(a) Sack and plunder of Tarnashirin, (b) Increase of tribute, (c) Absence of rain and recurrence of famine, (d) Transference of the people of the capital to Daulatabad, (e) Qarajai expedition, (f) Devastation of places, (g) Oppression of the people.—*T.M.S.*, pp. 115-15.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

44. Barani, p. 473.

45. Once Balban in his advice to his eldest son had pointed out that the king should not undertake any task unless he knows what its issue would be, for if the king leaves anything unfinished his dignity is bound to suffer. *T-i-A.*, p. 91.

46. Taghi had struck friendship with the Amiran-i-Sarlah of Gujrat and raised the standard of rebellion. He had made Mu'izzu'd-Din, Governor of Naharivala, a prisoner, and killed Malik Mu'zaffar, his assistant. He had plundered Cambay and besieged the port of Broach. The Sultan who was at that time busy in suppressing rebellion in Deogir immediately marched to Gujrat. Appraised of the Sultan's approach, Taghi fled from Broach after defeating and killing Malik Yusuf Boghra who was sent in pursuit. The Sultan marched against him in person and defeated him, and Taghi took shelter with the Jam in Thatta. The Sultan decided to pursue him thither but on the way fell ill and died. The army was thus placed in great difficulty. Barani, pp. 515-19, 534, 535.

47. Afif, pp. 45-47.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 54; Barani, p. 535.

49. Afif, p. 53.

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 57, 60-61, 65.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 197-99.

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 200-01, 205-04.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 208-09, 215-19.

55. According to Yahiya, Sultan Firuz Shah arrived in Delhi from his second Lakhnawati expedition in 762 A.H. (May-June, 1361 A.D.). After sometime he dug the Sirhind Canal and then sometimes afterwards marched to Nagarkot and thence to Thatta (*T.M.S.*, p. 131). Afif states that four whole years passed after the Sultan's return from Lakhnawati before he turned his mind towards Thatta (*Ta'rikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 191). The siege of Nagarkot took six months and the first expedition of Sultan Firuz could not have taken place before 767 A.H. (March-April, 1366 A.D.). After spending the rainy season in Gujrat the Sultan returned to Sind for his second expedition perhaps in the beginning of the next year. See *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, p. 322.

56. Afif, pp. 221-22.

57. The ruler was Jam Juna, and he was assisted in the government by his brother's son Bahaniya. Afif, p. 199; *Sirāt-i-Firuz Shahi* (Bankipur Mss.), ff 40A; *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, p. 102.
58. During the retreat to Gujrat, Khan-i-Jahan who was left as regent at Delhi became anxious about the fate of the army for lack of news. He removed the valuables of the Sultan to his own house and prohibited anyone to display individual power. He also rode about the city everyday displaying his strength but when rumours grew strong in the capital he even gave out that he had received news about the safety of the royal person. Afif, pp. 211-12, 238-39.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 225-27.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 229.
61. He abolished the cesses at the loss of a revenue of 3,000,000 *tankas*, E and D, Vol. III, p. 377; *J.A.S.B.*, Vol. XV, Oct., 1941, pp. 449-62; *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 175.
62. Yahya who hailed from Sirhind mentions five canals, viz., (a) from Sataldar to Jhajjar (a town in Rohtak Dist., Punjab), (b) from Mandawi (Karnal Dist., Punjab) and Simmur hills as far as Hansi (Hisar Dist.), (c) from Ghaggar to Harni-Khirali, (d) from Jamuna to the fort of Firuza and beyond it, (e) joining of Sarassati and Salima identified with Markanda river. *T.M.S.* (Eng. Trans.), pp. 130-31, 137; B.I., pp. 125-26, 180; Afif, p. 130.
63. *Jizyah* was paid by the Zimmi as a compensation for being spared death, and in lieu of military service. The following are the reasons for which the *jizyah* is imposed on non-Muslims: (a) exemption from Zakat and (b) conscription, (c) right of adjudication of coreligionists, (d) protection of life and property. The rate of *jizyah* may be of two kinds: (a) a rate agreed upon by treaty and agreement, (b) the rate imposed by the Imam on the population of a district conquered by force of arms. In the second case the rate is forty-eight *dirham* per annum for the rich, twenty-four *dirham* per annum for the middle class and twelve *dirham* per annum for the poor. There were several exemptions to the rule such as children, insane persons, imbecile, old and blind people and poor not engaged in business. Aghaides, pp. 398-99, 404-05; Hamidullah, *Muslim Conduct of State*, pp. 99, 100-02; Charles Hamilton, *Hidayah* (Eng. Trans.), Vol. II, pp. 211, 214; Wahed Husain, *Administration of Justice*, pp. 154-56.
64. Afif, p. 382.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 383.
66. *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 188, fn. 1.
67. Rev. James Reynolds (translated by), *Kitab-i-Yamini of Al-Uthbi*, pp. 37, 38 and 282-83; Muhammad Nazim, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, pp. 87-88. Jaipal was defeated by Sultan Mahmud in 392 A.H./1001 A.D., and he most probably burnt himself to death in the beginning of 393 A.H.
68. R. S. Pandit (translated by), *Rajatarangini of Kalhana*, pp. 343.

348, 384, as also Appendix B, p. 600; *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, p. 336.

69. Afif, p. 384.

70. *Ibid.*

71. According to Prof. Hodivala, the rate charged on the Brahmins was lower than even the rate charged for the poor. The Sultan "did not demand from them ten tankas of the higher value or denomination, each of which had an exchange value of 64 jitals, but lighter pieces of lower denomination, valued at only fifty jitals each". *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, pp. 336-37.

72. The jurists differed as to the definition and distinction among the rich, middle class and the poor. Some say that the person who needs to work in order to earn a living is a poor individual; the person who though having possessions works belong to the middle class, and those persons who own enough to afford to be idle may be placed under the category of the rich. According to others, the person who has not enough is poor; the person who has enough food for his family and himself, middle class; and the person who has more, rich. See *Muhammadian Theories of Finance*, p. 404.

73. *Futuh-i-Firuzshahi* gives the following list of unlawful taxes abolished by the Sultan:—

(a) Tax on the betel leaf market; (b) on the brokers; (c) on the butchers; (d) on superintendence of public enjoyments and festivities; (e) on the sale of flowers; (f) on irrigation; (g) octroi duties; (h) on sale of fish; (i) on trade of cotton dressing; (j) on soap making; (k) on rope selling; (l) on oil and ghee making; (m) on fried gram; (n) *Tehbazari*—a tax imposed by farmers who have the entire management of their own bazar; (o) *Chunghi-i-gallah*, i.e., a tax collected by the servants of the Kotwal or Superintendent; (p) tax on pension; (q) on gambling; (r) on horses; (s) on court fee; (t) police tax; (u) censor's fee; (v) House tax; (w) pasture tax.—*J.A.S.B.*, Vol. XV, Oct., 1941, pp. 441-62; see also Qureshi, *Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Appendix H, pp. 244-47.

74. Afif, p. 375.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

76. *Ibid.*, pp. 376-77.

77. *Idem.*

78. *Ibid.*, p. 377.

79. Sultan Firuz, however, was a lax administrator because there are instances in which he encouraged corrupt practices. Afif relates that once the Sultan overheard a soldier who was unable to produce his horse at the muster. On being inquired the soldier replied that if he had a gold *tanka* he could get a certificate for his horse. The Sultan then gave him a gold *tanka* with which the soldier bribed the clerk of the office and returned with the certificate to express his thanks.—*Ta'rikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, pp. 300-01.

80. *T.M.S.*, pp. 133-36.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

82. Badaoni, p. 238.
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 244-45; *T.M.S.*, pp. 146-48; Badaoni, p. 260. The name of the place of retreat is called Jalesar by Nizamu'd-Din, Jatessar by Yahya, and Chaptar by Badaoni.
84. *T.M.S.*, pp. 148-49.
85. Badaoni, pp. 260-61.
86. *T.M.S.*, p. 149-50; Kotlah is a Hindi word meaning small fortress. *T.M.S. (Eng. Trans.)*, p. 157, fn. 6.
87. *T.M.S.*, pp. 149-50.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 159. According to Yahya the people of Delhi from soldier to rabble had joined Sultan Mahmud Nasiru'd-Din Shah in his fight against Saadat Khan.
91. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
92. *T-i-A*, p. 253. See also B. De (translation by), *T-i-A*, p. 276.
93. In June, 1398 the deadlock at Delhi was brought to an end by a series of treacherous acts of Mallu Iqbal who gained possession of Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Mahmud Shah and forced Nusrat Shah to take shelter in Doab where he breathed his last in 1399. See *T.M.S.*, pp. 163-64; *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 195.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
95. E and D. Vol. III, pp. 446-47; See also *Zafarnama* (B.I.), Vol. II, pp. 121-23.
96. *T.M.S.*, p. 165.

PART III

CHAPTER VI

URBAN PEOPLE IN MEDIAEVAL POLITICS

I

Changes in Urban Life after Turkish Conquest

The Turkish conquest of India introduced many far-reaching changes in the life of its people. One of the most important effects of the Turkish rule was the urbanisation of a considerable section of population. Wherever the Turkish army penetrated, the Hindu chiefs, excepting the discontented and refractory among them, were generally left in possession of their ancestral property, in exchange of taxes and tributes. To keep however the turbulent under control usually a fort was constructed and a garrison maintained at important places. These fortified places grew up into new towns. The mosques, gateways, arches, domes, and the wall around the city with watch towers, became a feature of the new architectural style in Mediaeval India.¹ These towns, originally isolated camps of Muslim soldiers in the midst of a hostile Hindu population, gradually developed into populous centres. Sometimes, old towns and forts were reconstructed to make them stronger and spacious enough for accommodating various sections of people. Thus Sultan Balban reconstructed the Lahore Fort that had been pulled down by the accursed Mongols in the reign of Sultan Mu'izzu'd-Din Bahram Shah. He then sent the people of the villages, judges and chiefs, citizens and merchants to live in that city.² Thus the villagers even were invited to become city-dwellers.

Different sections of people lived in different quarters of a city. The author of *Masaliku'l-Absar*, Shihabu'd-Din Abu'l 'Abbas Ahmad, informs us on the authority of Shaikh Mubarak, that Deogir renamed as Daulatabad, the new capital founded by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, was divided by the king into different quarters each of which was meant for men of different professions. Thus, for example, there were different quarters for troops, ministers, clerks, Qazis, Shaikhs, Fakirs,

merchants. Each quarter, containing its own mosques, markets, workmen, was to form a separate township, entirely independent of those surrounding it.³

These towns in the middle ages, after the Turkish conquest, invited all sections of people to thrive in their warm and busy life. One of the most far-reaching changes introduced by the Turkish conquerors in the city life of mediaeval India was to open the gates of the city to the outcasts of the Hindu society. Prior to the Muslim conquest of this country, the upper caste consisted of the four *varnas* duly graded but subordinate under the royal families. Those belonging to the lower caste had little opportunity of following intellectual pursuits. Even the Vaisya and the Sudra ran the risk, at least in theory, of losing their tongue for the crime of reciting the Vedas.⁴ The position of the outcastes was more precarious. Al-Biruni enumerates eight guilds, *viz.*, the fuller, the shoemaker, the juggler, the basket and shield-maker, the sailor, fishermen, the hunter of wild animals and birds and the weaver who were considered outcastes and untouchables. Even lower than the outcastes were the Hadis, Domes and Chandals who did the dirty work.⁵ The lowest castes were not allowed to live inside the city wall, but were allowed to enter its wall for clearing the dirt of the city or performing any other work.⁶

The Turkish conquest of India changed the character of urban life qualitatively, by introducing the workers in large numbers inside the city. No embargo was placed on anyone desiring to take up his residence in the city. Moreover, there were several *karkhanas* or manufacturing centres directly under royal supervision. The author of *Masalik* informs us that the Sultan had a factory in which four hundred silk-weavers were employed, and the Sultan kept in his service five hundred manufacturers of golden tissue. "Every year Sultan distributes 200,000 complete dresses, 100,000 in spring and 100,000 in autumn. The spring dresses consist primarily of goods manufactured at Alexandria. Those of autumn are exclusively of silk manufactured at Delhi or imported from China and Irak. Dresses are also distributed to the monasteries and hermitages." During the reign of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq the *karkhanas* were in charge of Khwaja Abu'l Hasan. These *karkhanas* had several departments, *viz.*, the kitchen, the candle, the carpet stores, the insignia and so on.⁸ In addition to the goods produced from these royal establishments the different parts of the kingdom produced and manufactured various commodities and employed skilled and unskilled labourers.

The Italian traveller Marco Polo mentions Gujrat and Cambay as busy trade centres famous for their cotton, hide, gold, silver and other goods.⁹ Ibn Battuta states that in the whole world he did not see any country where commodities were cheaper than in Bengal.¹⁰ Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji had to allow a fair margin of profit to merchants from distant places in order to induce them to bring their goods to Delhi.¹¹ Various types of industry, *viz.*, dyeing industry, metal works, cushions, carpet, necklaces, dishes, embroidered belts and other articles were common in many big cities.¹² The workers engaged in these industries and the merchants who carried on trade locally or between different parts of the kingdom formed a considerable section of the population of a city.

The royal slaves, whose number increased during the days of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq to the highest figure of 180,000, were a disturbing factor in the city politics.¹³ Many of the slaves were settled in the different districts and cities such as Multan, Lahore, Samana, Hisar, Firuzah, and Hansi.¹⁴ Among the inhabitants of the city, there were a number of converted Mongols who had settled in India. Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji exterminated a number of them.¹⁵ The city in the middle ages after the Turkish conquest thus contained various sections of people. They may be broadly divided into the privileged classes, *i.e.*, the Amirs and Maliks, and the masses including the soldiers, traders, workers and other allied social classes, Hindus and Muslims.

When the Arabs invaded Sind and captured the fort and city of Brahmanabad, their General Muhammad bin Qasim made it a point to give protection to the artificers, merchants and the common people. But all the fighting men were put to the sword.¹⁶ All the people of Brahmanabad, altogether ten thousand in number, were divided separately into three classes of merchants, artisans and agriculturists.¹⁷ The people of Alor also had put up a stiff resistance to Muhammad bin Qasim due to their belief that their late ruler King Dahir was still alive. Their resistance lasted till Fufi, son of Dahir, deserted the city. But after Fufi had fled, all the citizens, merchants, artisans and traders made their submission and were given protection, because they were convinced of the death of Dahir to whom they owed their allegiance. After capturing the fort, Muhammad bin Qasim gave protection to them.¹⁸

The next conquerors of India were masters of the city of Ghazna, and their soldiers and followers brought with them the traditional spirit and outlook of that city. Instances of

the active co-operation and hostility of the people of Ghazna in the political affairs of the day are also available. During the rule of Sultan Bahram Shah of the Mahmudi family, the rulers of Ghazna and the Shansabani rulers of Ghur came into conflict. Sultan Bahram Shah had poisoned Qutbu'd-Din Muhammad, Maliku'l-Jibal, the brother of Sultan Saifu'd-Din Suri of Ghur. The latter therefore led an expedition against Ghazna, defeated the Ghaznavid troops, and forced Sultan Bahram Shah to take shelter in Hindustan. Sultan Suri established himself at Ghazna, and sent back his troops to Ghur. The Sultan and his Wazir along with a small number of retinue remained in Ghazna. When winter came, the roads and passes of Ghur became closed from excessive snow, and the people of Ghazna became aware that it was impossible for troops or succour to reach Ghazna from Ghur. They despatched then letters secretly to Sultan Bahram Shah. The purport of these letters was, "throughout the entire city and parts around, only a small number of persons have remained with Sultan Suri of the forces of Ghur, the whole of the remainder are servants of the Mahmudi dynasty. It behoveth (the Sultan) not let the opportunity to slip through hands and he should repair to Ghazni with all possible haste."¹⁹ In accordance with these letters Bahram Shah returned to Ghazna in 1149 and made a night attack upon Sultan Suri who was taken a prisoner, and killed after being subjected to much indignity.²⁰ This event enraged Sultan Bahau'd-Din Sam of Ghur, brother of Sultan Saifu'd-Din, but he died on the way while marching with his troops against Ghazna. The brother of Sultan Bahau'd-Din Sam, Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Jahan Suz, succeeded him and led an expedition against Sultan Bahram Shah. The forces of Ghazna were defeated and the last stand taken by Sultan Bahram with the help of the citizens of Ghazna was of no avail. The city was occupied by Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Husain who took a terrible vengeance on the citizens. The magnificent city was set afire and it burnt for seven days. Sultan 'Alau'd-Din was henceforth given the appellation of Jahan-suz or world-burner for the havoc caused by him at Ghazna.²¹

The name of Sultan Qutbu'd-Din Aibak may be cited as another invader of Ghazna, who was able to drive out its ruler by force of arms, but failed to hold the city due to the non-co-operation of its citizens. After the demise of Sultan Mu'izzu'd-Din Muhammad Ghuri, his nephew Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Mahmud confined himself to the ancestral dominion of Firuz Kuh.²² Some of the bond slaves of the family

including Taju'd-Din Yildiz, Nasiru'd-Din Qubachah and Qutbu'd-Din Aibak were manumitted by him. The former had made himself master of Ghazna, while the other two had extensive dominions in Hindustan. Sultan Qutbu'd-Din Aibak organised an expedition to occupy Ghazna. He was able to conquer the city by force and thus gained an extra distinction of being the ruler of a vast dominion in India, as also of the city which was once the seat of authority of his former master. The joy of possessing Ghazna elated him so much that he gave himself up to drunken orgy. The people of Ghazna were disgusted with his laxity and they invited Yildiz to return to his capital. As a result Sultan Qutbu'd-Din was taken by surprise by the sudden return of his rival, and had to beat a hasty retreat from Ghazna.²¹

II

Urban Politics in North-west India

In the Indian dominion of the Ghaznavids as well as Ghurids, the city of Lahore in the early days had acquired more importance than even Delhi. After Sultan Khusraw Shah of the Mahmudi family was driven off from Ghazna, Lahore had become the seat of the government of the Ghaznavids.²² Khusraw Malik, the last of the Ghaznavids, was captured by Mu'izzu'd-Din Ghuri by a stratagem in 1186, and Lahore henceforth became a part of the Ghuryan Empire.²³ The problem that faced the Sultans of Delhi in respect of a frontier city like Lahore had various aspects. *Firstly*, it had to be defended from the Mongol raiders; *secondly*, the Khokhars in the surrounding territories were a turbulent race²⁴, who did not hesitate to join hands with an invader whenever opportunity offered itself; *thirdly*, the citizens of Lahore were not always meek and submissive and there is at least one instance in which they helped the Mongol conquest of the city. After the death of Sultan Qutbu'd-Din Aibak his son Aram Shah ascended the throne at Lahore in 1210²⁵, but immediately after his accession he had to enter into a contest, for the throne with his brother-in-law who defeated and killed him in battle. The city changed hands several times.²⁶

The city of Lahore was occupied by Nasiru'd-Din Qubachah, after Aram Shah had left it to fight with Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Iltutmish.²⁷ When Taju'd-Din Yildiz was finally expelled from Ghazna in 1215 by the Khwarazm forces, he fell

back on Lahore. Sultan Iltutmish led an expedition against him and Taju'd-Din was defeated in a sharp contest near Tarain, and was imprisoned.³⁰ Lahore henceforth became a cockpit of a triangular contest among three Sultans, viz., Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Qubachah, Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Iltutmish, and Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Khwarazm Shah. The latter was chased from Khurasan and Afghanistan by the Mongol army of Chingiz Khan and sought shelter in the Punjab.³¹ After the departure of Jalalu'd-Din from Hindustan, Lahore finally came under the rule of Sultan Iltutmish who defeated his other rival Qubachah.³² During the incursion of Sultan Jalalu'd-Din, the Khokhars had formed an alliance with him against Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Qubachah. The uncertain condition of the region had given them an opportunity to fish in troubled waters.

What part did the people of Lahore play during this period of marches and counter-marches of different armies? There is no information available on this score, except the fact that the Khokhars living in the vicinity and around hilly tracts helped Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Mangbarni. But during another raid on Lahore led by the Mongols in 1240-41, the citizens of Lahore took an active part, and decided the fate of the city in favour of the invader. The merchant community in the middle ages were naturally in touch with the economic and political condition of the country. The problem of the defence of the city was sometimes linked with the attitude taken by the merchants and other citizens towards their ruler. Without their active co-operation it was sometimes impossible to defend a frontier city like Lahore from Mongol raiders.

During the reign of Sultan Mu'izzu'd-Din Bahram Shah, the *Muqti* of Lahore was Malik Qaraqush. When the city was infested by the Mongols under Nu'in and Ta'ir Bahadur³³, the people of the city did not act as the condition of the union demanded. By 'condition of union' Minhaj perhaps implied that the ruled should help the ruler against foreign invaders. As the citizens of Lahore refused to co-operate with Malik Qaraqush, the *Muqti* retreated hastily from the city.³⁴ The apathy to resistance came from the merchants, because a section of the people under the Kotwal made some effort to defend the city. The merchants had provided themselves with letters of protection from the Mongol Khans of Central Asia and therefore they had no interest in defending the city from the hands of the invaders.³⁵

The Mongols devastated the city and left it. Lahore saw

Mongols raids several times, and it was not until the end of Sultan Balban's reign that it was finally reoccupied by the forces of Delhi. The city was then repopulated by Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban.³⁸

The Mongol raids organised by the Ilkhans of Persia and the Chaghtais of Trans-Oxiana however continued, and the important cities of the North West like Lahore and Multan suffered great losses due to their raids. The Mongols thus disturbed the peace of the empire, and gave opportunity for the turbulent elements to raise their heads.

The Khokhars took the opportunity to raise the standard of rebellion whenever chance offered itself. Thus during the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, Khokhar Gul Chunder³⁷ helped Malik Halajun to put to death by treachery Malik Tatar Khurd, the Governor of Lahore. Khwaja-i-Jahan was sent against them and the rebellion was easily quelled and order was established in the city.³⁸ Again, during the days of the later Tughluqs, the Khokhars had become the real masters of the city. In the year 1394 Malik Sarang Khan drove out Shaikh Khokhar from Lahore.³⁹ But this expedition perhaps proved fruitless, because during the invasion of Amir Timur Shaikha Khokhar was in possession of the city. *Malfuzat-i-Timuri* describes him as the Governor of the Sultan of Delhi who at first submitted to the invader, but later on showed signs of defection. Shaikha Khokhar was imprisoned by the troops of Timur, and a ransom was laid on Lahore.⁴⁰

After the departure of Timur the Khokhars again raised their head, and under their leader Jusrath dominated the region around Lahore. From his mountainous retreat at Tekhar he defied the armies of Sultan Mubarak Shah (1421-34). Though he was forced to fly before the imperial army several times, his power remained undiminished.⁴¹ The Khokhars in the North West practically dominated the country around Lahore and helped Mongol inroads. The opposition of the Khokhars was an important factor in the mediaeval politics of Lahore and other towns in the North-Western frontier of the country.

Another frontier city of the empire in the North West was Multan. The Arabs had conquered Multan after a stiff resistance. The fort of Multan was situated on the south bank of the river Ravi. Muhammad bin Qasim was able to take it by storm only after two months of siege, in which many Arab soldiers and officers embraced death. As a result the Commander of the Arab forces had sworn vengeance on the city, and after its occupation altogether six thousand warriors

were put to death and all their relations and dependants were taken prisoner. But as was usual, the merchants, artisans and agriculturists were given protection.⁴² The Muslim army had suffered so much that Muhammad bin Qasim distributed the booty among them. Afterwards he had to devise plans for realizing the money to be sent to the Caliph.

After the Arabs, Multan came under the control of the Qaramitah heretics.⁴³ According to Al-Biruni there was at Multan a famous temple of Aditya or sun god, and it was destroyed by the Qaramitah heretics when they occupied Multan.⁴⁴ The Qaramitah was an offshoot of the Isma'ilian heresy. The Isma'ilians do not recognise the rightful succession of Imams recognised by the orthodox. They acknowledge only 'Ali, Hasan and Husain. They have a vision of an Imam who would have the power of amending and abrogating even the Qur'anic law, and who would have a rational order of society and promote science. The Isma'ilian doctrine had a democratic appeal, and, in spite of their suppression several times by the orthodox Sunni rulers and the fierce attack by orthodox opinion, it had a considerable following in the Muslim world.⁴⁵

Sultan Mahmud led an expedition against Abu'l Fuzh Da'ud, the Qaramitah ruler of Multan, in 1006 and captured the town.⁴⁶ But the Ghaznavid rulers could not long retain their hold on Multan, because Sultan Mu'izzu'd-Din had to undertake an expedition for gaining possession of Multan.⁴⁷ The city came under the Ghuriyan empire in 1175. After the death of Sultan Mu'izzu'd-Din Muhammad bin Sam, Multan became a part of the independent kingdom established by Nasiru'd-Din Qubachah. The latter was put to flight from Multan by the forces of Jalalu'd-Din Mangbarni, the fugitive ruler of Khiva.⁴⁸ Shortly afterwards Jalalu'd-Din left India, and Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Qubachah regained his hold over the city, but the Khwarazm and Mongol raids together with a sudden incursion of the Khalji tribesmen had diminished his strength. Moreover, he was harassed by the remnant of the forces left behind by Mangbarni. Taking advantage of his critical condition, Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Iltutmish led an expedition against Multan, and occupied the city almost without any opposition.⁴⁹

Thus the city of Multan was for a long time a stronghold of the Qaramitah heretics whose influence did not diminish even after Sultan Mahmud had ravaged it. The re-establishment of the Qaramitah hold over the city shows the popularity of the sect. According to Prof. Habib, labour discontent in the

middle ages naturally expressed itself in a mediæval form, i.e., the form of religious heresies, of which the most important was the Isma'ilian heresy.⁵⁰ Whether the Qaramitah heretics gained popularity in Multan due to their appeal to the labouring section of the population or for any other reason it is very difficult to guess. But their hold over a large section of the populace in Multan, and even at Delhi shows that this sect flourished in spite of persecution due to their democratic appeal.⁵¹

Multan saw a siege of two months after the accession of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji on the throne of Delhi in 1296. The sons of the late Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Firuz Khalji, Arkali Khan and Sultan Ruknu'd-Din Ibrahim, and the queen mother Malika-i-Jahan, had taken shelter in Multan. Immediately after ascending the throne, Sultan 'Alau'd-Din sent Ulugh Khan and Zafar Khan with an army, thirty to forty thousand strong, to reduce Multan (Nov., 1296). The oldest surviving son of Sultan Jalalu'd-Din, Arkali Khan, had made adequate preparation to counter the army of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji. After two months of siege however, the inhabitants of the city in conjunction with the Kotwal made submission to the invading army.⁵² The two brothers had no other way but to send Shaikhul-Islam Shaikh Ruknu'd-Din to intervene on their behalf. Ulugh Khan received the brothers with dignity, and announced his victory to Delhi.⁵³

The people of the city had played a decisive role in this siege. When Arkali Khan and Ruknu'd-Din Ibrahim were besieged in the city, the inhabitants and the Kotwal asked for quarter and made overtures of peace. The initiative was taken by the citizens of Multan and the Kotwal who were perhaps not prepared to incur losses in a civil war, and preferred the more powerful side. Ferishta states that the people of Multan and the Turkish army (*mardum-i-Multan wa Lashhar Turk*) deserted Arkali Khan and Sultan Ruknu'd-Din Ibrahim and submitted to Ulugh Khan and Zafar Khan.⁵⁴ Some of the Amirs were the first to desert to the besieging army, but it seems that they received support from other sections of the population.

A similar incident took place when Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq made preparation for overthrowing Sultan Nasiru'd-Din Khusraw Khan. He appealed to the *Muqti's* and *Walis*⁵⁵ of the different parts of the empire. One of the Amirs to whom Ghiyasu'd-Din appealed for help was Amir Mughlati, the *Wali* of Multan. But Mughlati, the *Wali* of Multan consi-

dered himself superior to Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq, because the Amir of Multan had under him many *Muqti's* who served him. To these *Muqti's* and the inhabitants of the city Ghiyasu'd-Din secretly sent letters, and instigated them to rise against Amir Mughlati. Bahram Siraj, one of the chiefs of Multan, came with a big following, and Mughlati being informed of this fled from the city. The people of Multan sent horse and foot in his pursuit, and he was killed.⁵⁶ Ghazi Malik, for that was the title of Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq, was able to win the sympathy of the *Muqti's* of Multan, and those inhabitants of the city who were taken in by the cry of religious war.

In another rebellion at Multan against Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, the people of the city were held responsible by the Sultan. It was the rebellion of Bahram Aibah Kishlu Khan, in the early years of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign. The cause of the rebellion was the impudence of 'Ali Khatati the messenger, sent by Sultan Muhammad to bring Bahram Aibah and his follower to Daulatabad. 'Ali Khatati picked up a quarrel with Luli, the son-in-law of Bahram Aibah. Moreover, he hurled reproaches and strong expressions against Bahram Aibah so that the people became afraid. When the rebellion broke out the Sultan had to take the field in person, and the rebels were defeated. The Governor met his death in the field of battle.⁵⁷ The Sultan wanted to punish the Multanis after suppressing the revolt, but the people of the city were saved due to the intercession on their behalf by Shaikh Ruknu'd-Din.⁵⁸ According to 'Isami the Sultan had ordered that the people of Multan high and low should be punished, and he prescribed for all of them death by burning. It was the intervention of the Shaikhul-Islam that saved the city from a terrible fate.⁵⁹

Multan being a frontier town was exposed to Mongol raids, and during the raid of Timur the city saw a siege and fell a prey to the invader's sword.⁶⁰ During the rule of Sultan Mubarak Shah of the Sayyidi dynasty, Multan was ravaged several times by Mongol raiders from Kabul. In 1431, during a Mongol raid on Multan, people of the city helped 'Imadu'l-Mulk the imperial general who was able to defeat the Mongol raiders. In the last days of Mubarak Shah, the Sultan appeased the Mongol raider Shaikh 'Ali by conferring the fort of Lahore and Dipalpur on him, and Multan was saved from further Mongol ravages for the time being.⁶¹

III

Urban Politics in North-East India

In 1201 Ikhtiyaru'd-Din Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar Khalji made a surprise attack on Nadia, and the old king was said to have escaped through the backdoor of his own palace. According to Minhaj-u'd-Din, Ikhtiyaru'd-Din Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar Khalji made a sudden dash from Bihar on Nadia, and not more than 18 horsemen could keep pace with him. None suspected his intention, and he was taken to be a trader. The Turkish horsemen reached the palace gate and attacked the guards unawares. According to Minhaj, while the palace was attacked, cries rose from the palace gate and the middle of the city.

It is evident from the above statement that the party of Muhammad Bakhtiyar and his 18 horsemen were aided by the main Turkish army which came behind to conquer Nadia.⁶² The city of Nadia was despoiled. After Nadia, Lakhnawati bowed before the mighty Turkish force. The city was renovated according to the needs of the conquerors and masjids, madrasahs and *khanqas* were constructed. But Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar Khalji had designs to carry his arms further in the North-East⁶³, and therefore the frontier city of Devkot⁶⁴ acquired much importance during his rule.

It was Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din 'Iwaz Khalji (1213-27) who improved the city's defence, and beautified the town. Ghiyasu'd-Din 'Iwaz Khalji was a great builder and during his time Lakhnawati became the premier city of Bengal. Among the remains of the once-flourishing city of Gaur or Lakhnawati, the remains of the Hindu period are not to be found. The new city built by Turkish conquerors was probably an extension of the old one on the southern side.⁶⁵ The new capital constructed by the Turkish conquerors was situated between the Phulbari and Kotwali gate. This was protected by an earthen rampart surrounding the whole area and mounted with towers at all ends and a deep ditch beyond, except on the western side where the boundary of the city touched the stream of the river Ganga and prevented any intruder from making a surprise attack. The whole city was thus well protected by a high wall and a deep ditch. The city had roads running in all directions and in order to facilitate communication Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din 'Iwaz Khalji constructed a road the ruins of which are still visible, connecting Lakhnawati

with Lakhnor and Devkot.⁶⁶ Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din constructed also many masjids, madrasahs and buildings at his capital whose ruler acquired an extra distinction for being recognised by the Khalifa of Baghdad.⁶⁷

The population of the city increased by leaps and bounds and the large market place of Lakhnawati⁶⁸ hummed with traders and merchants from different parts of the country. The city attained magnificence under the Turkish rulers and the Portuguese historian Faria Y Souza described the city as containing 1,200,000, citizens in the 16th century. According to the same author the city of Lakhnawati was so crowded that at the time of religious festival and processions number of people were trodden down to death. The streets were stated to have been broad, straight and flanked on both the sides with trees to protect the populace from the heat of the day.⁶⁹

Another foreigner, Ibn Battuta, who visited Bengal in the middle of the 14th century, testifies to the cheap price of commodities in this province. The Moorish traveller describes Bengal as an Inferno full of blessings. The prices of some of the commodities as given by him are as follows⁷⁰ :—

Rice	80 <i>rails</i> (1 <i>rail</i> =14 seers of the present day)	8 <i>dirhams</i>
1 milch cow	for	3 <i>silver</i> <i>dinars</i>
8 fat hens	for	1 <i>dirham</i>
15 pigeons	for	1 <i>dirham</i>
1 fat lamb	for	2 <i>dirhams</i>
1 <i>rail</i> of sugar	for	4 <i>dirhams</i>
1 <i>rail</i> of rose water	for	8 <i>dirhams</i>
1 <i>rail</i> of <i>ghee</i>	for	4 <i>dirhams</i>
1 <i>rail</i> of sesame oil	for	2 <i>dirhams</i>

30 cubits of finest cotton cloth for 2 *dinars* and so on.

It is difficult to calculate the above prices in terms of modern money⁷¹, but it is evident that the prices in Bengal were cheaper than any other country that the globe-trotter had visited during his sojourn through the busy trade centres of Africa and Asia.

According to Barani, it was the habit and practice of the people of Lakhnawati to raise their head in rebellion and those who had experience had given Lakhnawati the name of *Bulghakpur* or city of rebellion. Since the Muslim conquest,

governors sent from Delhi had taken advantage of the distance and of the difficulties of communication, for Lakhnawati is a far-off cry. If the governor hesitated to rebel others would rise up against him, kill him and seize the country. In fact, the people of the place had a disposition to revolt and the disaffected and evil disposed among them generally succeeded in alienating the loyalty of the governors.⁷²

The governors of Lakhnawati adopted a policy of recognising the *de facto* rulers of Delhi. During the period of anarchy that followed the death of Sultan Iltutmish, they enjoyed real power in their distant province. The Hindus of the province, it appears, had accepted the Turkish rule, and there seems to have existed a cordial relation between the Hindus and their conquerors. The conquerors had already formed a society of their own and the appreciation or denunciation of this society weighed much to the Turkish rulers. Thus when after nearly 3 months of hazardous campaign in his fruitless bid to conquer Tibet, Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar Khalji returned to Devkot with the remnants of his shattered grand army, his own people did not spare him, and even his glorious past could not save him from the hands of public reprobation. Whenever he rode through the streets the widows and orphans of the soldiers, who had accompanied him during his ill-fated expedition, and did not return, "would wail and utter imprecations against him and revile him, so that from henceforth he did not ride again".⁷³ It was difficult for an unsuccessful general to show his face in the public, and Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar, in spite of his glorious past records, was not spared by the Turkish families who had suffered due to his Kamrupa *debacle*.

'Ali Mardan Khalji, the next ruler, was a brave but cruel person and was disliked for his treacherous conduct towards his own leader Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar Khalji whom he had murdered. But he was able to gain the favour of Sultan Qutbu'd-Din Aibak. The latter helped him to regain his hold over Lakhnawati from where Malik 'Izzu'd-Din Muhammad Shiran Khalji had temporarily ousted him.⁷⁴ He was the first ruler of Lakhnawati who had assumed formal independence under the title of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din. His cruelty together with the empty boasts⁷⁵ in which he used to indulge made him extremely unpopular not only to the Khalji Amirs but also to the commoners. Accordingly, the Khalji Amirs and Malik who rose up in arms against him were helped by "the weak and the indigent (people)"⁷⁶, to dethrone him. The rebels

killed him and placed on the throne Hisamu'd-Din 'Iwaz Khalji. The latter took the title of Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din 'Iwaz Khalji and made Lakhnawati his capital. His justice and benevolence attracted people towards his capital. His affairs became so prosperous that he read the *Khutbah* in his name and issued coins. In the words of Minhaju'd-Din the court historian, his sworn enemy, "people from all sides turned their face towards him".⁷⁷ He also received recognition from the Caliph, and Lakhnawati assumed an importance unprecedented in its history. It was singularly unfortunate that Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din was defeated and killed in battle by the forces of Delhi sent under Prince Nasiru'd-Din, the eldest son of Sultan Iltutmish.⁷⁸ After him no governor from Delhi could raise the prestige of the city to such eminence.

The next independent ruler⁷⁹ of Lakhnawati was Sultan Mughisu'd-Din, for that was the title taken by Malik Ikhtiyaru'd-Din Yuzbak-i-Tughril in 1253.⁸⁰ The theory of Barani that the people of Lakhnawati always approved of rebellious governors is perhaps not true in all cases, because, according to Minhaju'd-Din, this rebellious act on the part of Malik Yuzbak was condemned by all the people of the realm of Hindustan, both clergy and laity, Hindus and Musalmans.⁸¹ Whether by the words "all the people of the realm of Hindustan", Minhaju'd-Din means the citizens of Lakhnawati also, or not, it is difficult to assume. But then the action of Yuzbak-i-Tughril was bound to be condemned, because twice at least prior to his assumption of the title of Sultan he had displayed hostility and sedition towards his sovereign.⁸² Naturally his behaviour was disapproved by the Hindus and Muslims alike. It appears from Minhaj's statement that the opinion of the former was actually counted as something, and the Hindus had started taking interest in the internal politics of the Turkish nobility; otherwise it is difficult to see why the historian Minhaju'd-Din would mention them along with the Muslim laity and clergy.⁸³

Another event, which followed just after the unfortunate and tragic end of Sultan Mughisu'd-Din at Kamarupa in 1257⁸⁴, proves conclusively that the citizens of Lakhnawati, Hindus and Muslims alike, disapproved of the anarchy created by the Turkish Amirs and Maliks who always grabbed at each others *Aqta'*, if opportunity offered itself. The citizens of Lakhnawati were against this baronical anarchy. Naturally they protested against the attempt of Malik Taju'd-Din Arslan Khan-i-Sanjar, the Governor of Karra and Oudh, to

conquer Lakhnawati, taking advantage of the absence of its Governor.

The *Muqti* of Lakhnawati during this period was one Malik 'Izzu'd-Din Balban-i-Yuzbaki.⁸⁵ In 1259 Malik 'Izzu'd-Din Balban had proceeded to Bang with all his troops and Amirs and had left the city of Lakhnawati undefended. This is quite clear from the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* which states clearly, *Mugla' Lakhnawati batarf Walit Bang rafih bud wa Shahr-i-Lakhnawati Khali guzastah* (B. I. Text, p. 267) i.e., "the *Muqti* of Lakhnawati had proceeded to Bang, and the city was denuded (of troops)". Taking advantage of this undefended state of the city Malik Arslan Khan advanced to occupy the city. He never expected any opposition from the citizens, but surprisingly enough when he reached the gate of Lakhnawati, the inhabitants of the city took shelter within the walls and closed the gates to the invading army. For three days, they defended the city against the attack of the soldiers of the turbulent baron. But the untrained masses could not long stand the onslaught of the military might of Taju'd-Din Arslan Khan. The city was taken by storm and after his victory Malik Taju'd-Din Arslan took a terrible vengeance on the inhabitants. The property of Hindus and Muslims alike was plundered by him. The property, cattle and captives that fell into the hands of his followers was great.⁸⁶ This event is significant since it conclusively shows that the resistance to Arslan Khan was organized by all the inhabitants of the city and the victorious general did not spare his own coreligionists. The absent governor of Lakhnawati came too late to help his subjects, and was defeated and killed by Taju'd-Din Arslan Khan before the gates of the city.⁸⁷

Under Taju'd-Din Arslan Khan and his son Tatar Khan Lakhnawati enjoyed autonomy unmolested by the Sultans of Delhi. But after the accession of Sultan Balban, Tatar Khan sent presents to him.⁸⁸ After his death the control of Delhi over Lakhnawati became again firm enough to enable Sultan Balban to appoint a Turkish slave, Tughril by name, to its governorship.⁸⁹ Tughril however did not hesitate to assume independent authority as soon as he was able to establish his control over the province. He defeated Amin Khan, the governor of Oudh, and assumed the title of Sultan Mughisu'd-Din and struck coins in his own name.⁹⁰ The news of this rebellion had reached Delhi sometimes in 1279.⁹¹

The Bengal army also defeated the subsequent expeditions sent against Tughril. The success of Tughril Khan was

largely due to the support that he had received from the people of the province. Tughril Khan had befriended the people of the city.⁸² His popularity was largely due to his liberality and even those soldiers who were sent from Delhi often deserted to his side. After the defeat of Tughril a number of them fell prisoners in the hands of Balban. His people followed him "through thick and thin, and none voluntarily betrayed him. In short, Balban was now at war not with an individual rebel but with a whole province, and this accounts for the repeated failures of the imperial armies against Bengal, and the Sultan's own difficulties in subduing Tughril".⁸³

Sultan Balban had to make vast preparations against the rebel and he collected an army of nearly two lacs of soldiers.⁸⁴ Even then he had to court the co-operation of Rai Danuj of Sunargaon, who insisted upon being received by the Sultan standing.⁸⁵ The rebellious governor on hearing the approach of the Sultan took the road to Jainagar, in east Bengal. For days together no news of his hiding place was received. Accidentally a party of scouts sent under Malik Muhammad Shir-andaz, the chief of Kol, and his brother Malik Muqaddar came over a few grain-dealers whom they suspected to be returning from Tughril's camp. Two of the merchants were immediately killed to terrify the rest. These merchants in fear guided the scouts to the rebel camp, and though few in number the chief of Kol and his brother attacked the tent of Tughril who being surprised in his camp mistook the incident to be an attack by the main body of the Sultan's forces, and was killed while attempting to escape.⁸⁶ This incident clearly demonstrates the popularity of Tughril whose subjects did not betray his camp to the Sultan though at heart they were afraid of the wrath of Sultan Balban who took a terrible revenge on the people of Lakhnawati for supporting Tughril and in the bazar of the city which was one *kros* in length all those who had supported Tughril were gibbeted.⁸⁷

While leaving Lakhnawati in charge of his second son Sultan Balban advised Bughra Khan to follow certain rules of conduct because Lakhnawati was far off from Delhi⁸⁸, and being a turbulent province, it required wise administration. The Sultan advised his son to follow a middle course in collecting the revenue. Sultan Balban knew that any extreme policy in revenue collection may cause rebellion at Lakhnawati.⁸⁹ According to *Riyazu's-salatin* the Sultan also advised his son to retreat to a far-off place in case of a war with the Sultan of Delhi. Care of the army and Muslim saints was also

enjoined upon Bughra Khan, because the strength of those who have left this world is greater than thousand walls of Alexander.¹⁰⁰

During the Khalji period Lakhnawati was considered to be a place of shelter for all turbulent spirits. Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Khalji, who was averse to award punishment, ordered the transportation of a thousand Thugs to Lakhnawati.¹⁰¹ Again 'Alau'd-Din Khalji, after returning from his first raid in the south, planned of retreating to Lakhnawati, in order to escape from the possible wrath of Sultan Jalalu'd-Din Firuz Khalji.¹⁰² Later on when 'Alau'd-Din Khalji himself became the Sultan, he thought of sending Zafar Khan to Lakhnawati and thus to rid himself of a powerful noble of whom he was jealous.¹⁰³

Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq had to send an expedition against Lakhnawati¹⁰⁴, to bring the province to loyalty. But his attempt to settle the affairs of Bengal as also that of his son failed miserably, and during the reign of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq, Shamsu'd-Din Ilyas Haji had established his independent rule in Bengal. Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq sent two expeditions against Bengal, once in 1353 when Ilyas Haji baffled the Sultan by taking shelter in the fortress of Ekdala, and again in 1358 when Sultan Sikandar, the son of Ilyas Haji, once more saved his independence by taking shelter in the same fortress.¹⁰⁵ Significantly enough, Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq gave the name of Azadpur to the fortress of Ekdala.¹⁰⁶

The failure of the Sultan and of other rulers to subdue Bengal permanently has been ascribed by Shams-i-Siraj Afif mainly to two causes. Firstly, the land of Bengal was a land of virile fighting men, and secondly, the nobles of the country passed their lives in their islands.¹⁰⁷ These brave fighting men of Bengal were the *paiks*, who, according to Barani, were perpetually bragging of their valour and had picked up the betel of self-immolation in the presence of Shamsu'd-Din Ilyas, the *Bhang-eater*.¹⁰⁸ The bravery of the *paiks* of Bengal who acted as the landed militia of the province made the task of conquering Bengal difficult for any outsider. And though the rajas, ranas and zamindars of Bengal and certain other people had joined Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq and were received in his favour¹⁰⁹, the province of Bengal could not be conquered because of geographical difficulties and the bravery of the foot soldiers who were mostly plebeian in origin. Thus Shamsu'd-Din Ilyas Haji and his son owed their throne to their ordinary subjects who were never on friendly terms with the people of the upper province.¹¹⁰ Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq also

received their service. During the second retreat from Gujrat the defence of the rear of his army was entrusted to the command of Zafar Khan who had in his train numerous and countless Bengali foot soldiers. It was due to their bravery that enemy was repulsed with heavy loss.

IV

People and Politics in South India

In South India, according to the Portuguese traveller Domingoes Paes, there existed walled towns and villages, though the ruler of the country was not in favour of strong fortifications, and did not allow his subjects to build stone-walls for fear of their becoming too strong. "The whole country", says Domingoes Paes, who wrote his account probably between 1520-22, "is thickly populated with cities and towns and villages, the King allows them to be surrounded only with earthen walls for fear of their becoming too strong. But if a city is situated at the extremity of his territory he gives his consent to its having stone-walls but never the towns; so that they make fortress of the cities but not of the towns."¹¹ What was the line of demarcation between a city and a town in the dictionary of the Portuguese traveller, it is difficult to guess. If by a city he implied a more thickly populated and important town, then one is at a loss to understand why the towns were not given permission to have stone-walls. Possibly, the need for defending the cities which were centres of trade and commerce, and played a vital role in the country's economy, induced the rulers to grant them permission of having stone-walls, if necessary. In South India, forts were surrounded by earthen as well as stone-walls. When Malik Kafur besieged the citadel of Warangal (1309-10)¹², he had to pitch his tent round the fort the circumference of which has been described by Amir Khusraw as twelve thousand and forty-six yards.¹³ After a hand-to-hand fight the outer earthen fortification came under the possession of the invading army, but then they had still to storm the inner fortress of stone.¹⁴ King Prataprudra, however, was reduced to such a stress that he negotiated for peace, and obtained the same after surrendering much of his accumulated treasure.¹⁵

During the afore-mentioned invasion of Kafur we hear of postal dislocation which created anxiety at Delhi, because no news of the invading army was received at the capital. The

posts which had been established along Delhi-Warangal route for receiving news were dislocated due to hostile activity. Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji in his anxiety consulted Shaikh Nizamud-Din Auliya, through Qazi Mughisu'd-Din, and received an encouraging reply from the venerable Saint. Fortunately, the news of victory reached him on the same day.¹¹⁶ The postal dislocation and the inconvenience caused thereby were surely not due to the opposition of the kings and rulers of the territories in the rear of the invading army, because they had already made their submission, and the most powerful among them, King Ram Deva, the Yadava King of Devagiri, even co-operated with Malik Kafur's army in its march towards Warangal.¹¹⁷ Naturally therefore, the difficulty in maintaining communication was largely due to the opposition of the plebeians. On another occasion, there broke out a regular revolt inside the expeditionary force sent under Ulugh Khan, the future Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq against King Prataprudradeva (1321), due to postal black-out. The leaders of the revolt spread the rumour of the death of Sultan Ghiyasud-Din Tughluq and some of the Amirs—Malik Tamar, Malik Tigin, Malik Mall Afghan and Malik Kafur—withdrew with their forces. The expedition lost all chances of success, and Ulugh Khan had to withdraw his forces from the fort of Warangal to Deogir. Ulugh Khan had to bring a second expedition to capture the fort.¹¹⁸

During the South India expedition, the invading army from the north, occasionally met with warriors belonging to the fair sex fighting in the enemy rank. These women warriors gave good account of themselves in battles. Their heroism led 'Isami the historian to call them *Madah Shir* or lioness. According to *Futuhu's-Salatin*, the bravery and skill of female soldiers excited admiration from their enemy who exclaimed, "If the ladies of this country can put such a fight, (God knows) what the male folk would be."¹¹⁹ When Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq invested the Raja of Kampili in his fort a fearful battle ensued, and among those who defended the city were women who hurled weapons on his soldiers from inside the fort¹²⁰, an unique episode in the middle ages. The Turkish expansion in the south reached its zenith in the 1st half of the 14th century. During the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, the hold of the Sultanate in South India had tightened. An inscription at the fort at Qandhir; Nandel district (Hyderabad), claims that during the rule of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq "There is no part of the country which is not con-

nected with the Royal Court, either by payment of the tribute or (annexed to the administration) divisions or (bearing some other kind of) relation; or through the Imperial fief-holders or a grant or other officials."¹²¹

Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq led an expedition against the ruler of Kampili which comprised modern Raichur, Dharwar, Bellary and Guntur districts. The war between the Rai of Kampili and Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq has been vividly described by the Portuguese traveller Nuniz.¹²² The *casus belli* of this war was supplied by the revolt of Bahau'd-Din Gursasp, a nephew of Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq, and Governor of Sagar, who, after being defeated by the Imperial army, had taken shelter with the ruler of Kampili.¹²³ The Imperial army attacked the dominion of the King of Kampili who had become a friend of the rebel and his family. The Raja was able to defeat the imperialists twice, but was worsted on the third occasion. Before the fall of the fort, however, he sent Bahau'd-Din to Vir Ballala III, the ruler of Dwarasamudra, who betrayed Bahau'd-Din into the hands of the Sultan.¹²⁴

Kampili remained a province of the empire for 7 or 8 years, and during this period two governors were appointed. Among these two the first one has been variously called as Enbiquymelly, Milequeniby and Melinebiquy by Nuniz who also describes the circumstance under which the second governor Deorao, the former Minister of the King of Kampili was appointed.¹²⁵ Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq after his conquest of Kampili, had to leave for the North in order to suppress the rebellion of Kishlu Khan.¹²⁶ "When it was known", says Nuniz, "throughout the country how he was out of it, those who had escaped to the mountains with others, who against their will through fear had taken oaths of fealty for their towns and villages, rose against the Captain Milequeniby, and came to besiege him in the fortress, allowing no provision to go into him, nor paying him the tax that had been forced on them. And Milequyniby seeing how little profit he could get in this country, and how hardly he was obeyed, and how far-off was the succour sent by his lord the King, sent quickly to him to tell him how all the land was risen against him and how every one was lord of what he pleased, and no one was on his side; His Highness should decide what he thought best to be done in such a case."¹²⁷ According to the same writer the Sultan took counsel from his advisers, and released six captives whom he had brought from Kampili, and appointed one of

them, Deorao, as the governor after administering an oath of fealty to him.¹²⁸ There is no doubt that this appointment, and the policy underlying it, achieved its purpose, because Deorao or Devaraj was able to restore the confidence of the people, to pacify those who had revolted, and to secure their goodwill. Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq was able to conquer Kampili by force of arms, but he had to bow before the storm of popular movement and appoint a governor related to the old house. The event mentioned by Nuniz is significant due to the vivid description given by the Portuguese traveller about the ferocity with which the movement was conducted. According to Nuniz when Deorao arrived in Nagundy (Anagundi) "they found only the ruined basements of the houses peopled by few poor folk", and Deorao had to undertake a tour through the country in order to repopulate Kampili, and bring back the people to normal life.

The account of Nuniz is not altogether free from faults because according to the Moorish traveller Ibn Battuta¹²⁹, the late Rai had eleven sons who had embraced Islam, and lived at the Emperor's court. It is extremely improbable that the emperor could have forgotten about them while searching for a relation of the late Raja to be sent as the governor of Kampili. The only reason however which could have deterred the Sultan from doing so was the fear of a revival of the old Hindu kingdom under their leadership. Again it is extremely doubtful whether the Sultan called forth a conference of his councillors, as stated by Nuniz, to decide his policy regarding Kampili.

Deorao who has been identified with Harihara, the founder of Vijayanagar Kingdom, remained loyal up to 1336, which is the traditional date of the foundation of Vijayanagar Kingdom. Barani indirectly refers to this event¹³⁰, when he wrote about the revolt of the Hindus of Warangal under Kaniya Naik, *i.e.*, Krishna Nayak. According to Barani, one of the relations of Krishna Nayak whom the Sultan had sent to Kampili apostatized from Islam and revolted and the land was lost to the empire.

Whatever may be the truth as to their origin¹³¹, it is certain that Harihara and Bukka together with other three brothers Kampana I, Marapa and Mudappa, declared their independence by 1336. In their struggle to establish the Hindu kingdom of Vijaynagar they were supported by the whole mass of Hindus of Hoysala dominions.¹³² There was a great combination of Hindu rulers of South India to revive their inde-

pendence, and Kanya Naik, i.e., Krishna Nayak of Warangal, son of the Kakatiya King Prataprudra, drove out Malik Moqbul, the governor of Tilang. This combination of Hindu chiefs was headed by Harihara I of Vijayanagar.¹²³

It appears that in South India the hold of the Delhi Sultanate was lost due to the struggle waged by all sections of the people.¹²⁴ The plebeians of the land flocked to the standard of rebel-leaders, and their collective effort was crowned with success. The beginning of this mighty upsurge was made by the citizens of Kampili who without any recognized leader fought against the imposition of a governor not of their own faith. They made the beginning, and the princes and leaders like Krishna Nayak and Harihara only carried their movement to its logical conclusion.

NOTES

1. K. M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, p. 165.
2. *T.M.S.*, p. 40.
3. E and D, Vol. III, p. 575.
4. N. C. Sen Gupta, *Evolution of Ancient Indian Laws* (Tagore Law Lecture, 1950), p. 230. Manu states that the king should punish the Sudra for taking meal with the Brahmin at the same table (VIII: 281).
5. Sachau, *Al-Birani's India* (Eng. Trans.), Vol. I, pp. 101-02.
6. *Ibid.* Caste system had such a great influence on Indian social life that even when the lower castes embraced Islamic faith they retained the name of the profession they belonged to prior to their conversion. See *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. III, p. 239.
7. E and D, Vol. III, p. 578.
8. *Afif*, pp. 337-39.
9. Col. Yule, *Ser Marco Polo* (edited by Cordier), Vol. II, pp. 393-98.
10. *Rehla*, p. 234.
11. Barani, p. 315.
12. See *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, pp. 94-104.
13. *Afif*, p. 270.
14. *T.M.S.*, p. 143.
15. Barani, pp. 252-53, 336.
16. *Chachnama*, p. 195.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 222-25.
19. Raverty, p. 440.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 348-50, 353, 440-41.
21. Ghazna was lost to the Ghuryans when Sultan 'Alau'd-Din was defeated and imprisoned by Sultan Sanjar Saljuq, and Sultan Bahram Shah reoccupied the city. In 1157 the descendants of Sultan Mahmud were finally expelled from Ghazna by the Ghurz Turks. The latter in their turn were driven out of the city by Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Muhammad Sam, the nephew of the world burner, in 1173. See *T-i-N*, pp. 25, 57, 60, 72, 73 etc.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 134-36, 140.
24. *T-i-N*, pp. 25-27, 116-17; *Khulasatu't-twarikh*, pp. 64-65.
25. *T-i-N*, pp. 116-17.
26. They had helped the Shahi king Anandpal in 1008 against Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna and due to the terrific onslaught of 30,000 Khokhars on Sultan Mahmud's army, the latter was placed in extreme difficulty. But for the accidental flight of the elephant that carried the Shahi king from the battlefield, the Khokhar onslaught would have decided the fate of the battle in favour of the Hindu confederacy. See Ferishta, Vol. I, p. 45. Major Raverty has pointed out that Ferishta has confused Khokhars with Gakhars, another tribe in the North West (Raverty, p. 453, fn. 4). The Khokhars rose in rebellion against Mu'izzu'd-Din Muhammad bin Sam after receiving the news of his defeat at the hands of the Khwarazm Shah at Andkhud. Their leaders Bakan and Surkhia entered into an alliance with Rai Sal who was residing in the hilly country between Lahore and Ghazna. It was with difficulty that their rebellion was suppressed by the Sultan himself. See *Tafu'l-Ma'asir* (A.S.B. Mss.) FF 205A-06A. This tribe occupied a tract in the salt range. See the *Punjab Gazetteer*, Vol. XXVIII, Part A, p. 40, *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. VI, p. 198; and Vol. XIII, p. 194.
27. *T-i-N*, p. 141; *Futuhu's-Salatin* (Agra ed.), pp. 101-02.
28. *T-i-N*, pp. 141-42, 170.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 135, 171.
31. E and D, Vol. II, pp. 389-96; Howorth, *History of Mongols*, Vol. I, pp. 89-91.
32. *T-i-N*, p. 144.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
34. Raverty, p. 653.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 656n.
36. See *ante*.
37. Badaoni, p. 231.
38. *T.M.S.*, p. 106—This revolt took place in 743 A.H. (1342-43 A.D.).
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 154, 157-58.
40. E and D, Vol. III, pp. 415, 455, 473, 474, 485. Vol. II, pp. 56-58.

41. *T.M.S.*, pp. 192, 194-99, 212-13, 223-24. See also *I.H.C.*, 1958.
42. *Chachnama*, pp. 237-38.
43. E and D, Vol. II, p. 441.
44. *Al-Biruni's India*, Vol. I, pp. 116-17.
45. E and D, Vol. II, Note I, pp. 572-74; E. G. Brown, *A Literary History of Persia*, Vol. I, pp. 391-415; *Moslem Schism and Sects (Al Faruq Bain al-Firaq)* of Mansur 'Abdu'l Kabir ibn Tahir al-Baghdadi (d. 1037). Eng. Translation by Kate Chambers Seelye (Cambridge University Press, 1920), Vol. I, p. 27.
46. *Al-Uthi* (Eng. Trans.), pp. 325-27; Nazim, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, p. 88.
47. *T-i-N*, p. 116.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
49. See ante.
50. *Introduction* in E and D, Vol. II (Aligarh ed.), p. 19.
51. See ante.
52. Barani, p. 249.
53. *T.M.S.*, p. 71; Badaoni, p. 183.
54. *Ferishta* (Bombay ed.), Vol. I, p. 178.
55. The term *Muqti* and *Wali* are practically synonymous, but in theory, perhaps the position of the former was politically superior to the latter. See *Agrarian System of Muslim India*, pp. 221-23; *Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, p. 197.
56. *T.M.S.*, p. 89; *Tughluqnama* (Aurangabad Text), p. 63.
57. *T.M.S.*, pp. 99-101. "Our authorities assign no date to this rebellion. The circumstances leading up to it enable one to assign it to the year 1328." See *Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq*, p. 146.
58. Barani, pp. 478-79.
59. *Futuhu's-Salatin*, p. 427. In the latter part of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign Shahu Afgan, a rebel, killed the governor of Multan and advanced his claim to royalty. This uprising was inter-linked with the revolt of the Amiran-i-Sadah and was easily suppressed. *T.M.S.*, pp. 106-07.
60. *Ibid.*, 163.
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 201-02, 218-21, 231.
62. *T-i-N*, pp. 150-51; *History of Bengal* (Dacca University), Vol. II, pp. 7-8.
63. *T-i-N*, pp. 153-55. See also Appendix A.
64. Devkot was in Pargana Gangarampur in the Dinaipur District. *J.A.S.B.*, 1875.
65. *Archaeological Survey Reports*, Vol. XV (1879-80), pp. 45-50; Ravanshaw, *Gaur and its Ruins and Inscriptions*, p. 2.
66. Raverty, p. 536. Lakhnor has been identified with Nagor in the Birbhum District.
67. *J.A.S.B.*, 1873.
68. Barani, p. 91.
69. *Gaur and its Ruins*, p. 2.

70. *Rihla*, pp. 234-35.
71. See *History of Bengal* (Dacca University), Vol. II, pp. 101-02.
72. Barani, p. 82.
73. *T-i-N*, p. 156.
74. Raverty, pp. 573-76.
75. *T-i-N*, pp. 159-60.
76. Raverty, p. 580.
77. *T-i-N*, p. 161.
78. *Ibid.*, pp. 163-64.
79. Balika Khalji an upstart had assumed independent power, after the death of prince Nasiru'd-Din. He was defeated and killed by Sultan Shamsu'd-Din in his third expedition. *Futuh*, pp. 120-21.
80. *T-i-N*, p. 263.
81. *Idem*.
82. *Ibid.*, pp. 261-62.
83. Raverty, p. 764 f.n. 5.
84. Raverty, pp. 764-65; Sir Edward Gait, *History of Assam* (Second Ed.), p. 37.
85. Raverty, pp. 769, 849.
86. *T-i-N*, p. 267.
87. Minhaju'd-Din wrongly states (*T-i-N*, p. 268) that Arslan Khan was imprisoned and killed. Raverty has rightly pointed out that the text has killed the wrong man (p. 770, f.n. 9).
88. Barani, p. 53.
89. *Futuhu's-Salatin*, p. 160.
90. Barani, pp. 83-84.
91. Stewart, *History of Bengal*, p. 70; *J.A.S.B.*, 1874, p. 287.
92. *Futuh*, pp. 160-61.
93. *History of Bengal* (Dacca University), Vol. II, p. 61.
94. Barani, p. 86.
95. See *ante*.
96. Barani, pp. 89-90.
97. See *ante*.
98. Barani, p. 95.
99. *Idem*.
100. *Riyazu's-Salatin* (Eng. trans.), pp. 85-86.
101. Barani, p. 189.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 229.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 254.
104. Shamsu'd-Din Firuz had replaced the decendants of Bughra Khan on the throne by 1301. He never used the title of Bin Sultan on his coin, and he appears to have been the founder of a new line of kings. It was against one of his sons, Bahadur Shah, that Sultan Ghiasu'd-Din Tughluq led an expedition in 1324. The former was imprisoned but he gained his freedom during the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq. But the latter had to carry an expedition against Bahadur Shah for his rebellion in 1328. Bahadur was defeated and killed in battle. The incapability of the governor

appointed by Muhammad bin Tughluq, and the consequent confusion in the province helped the growth of an independent kingdom in Bengal under Ilyas Haji. See *Futuh*, p. 428, Barani, pp. 451, 461, 480; *T.M.S.*, pp. 98, 104-05; *J.A.S.B.*, 1867.

105. Afif, pp. 111, 149.
106. *Ibid.*, *Sirat-i-Firuz Shahi* (Bankipur Mss.), FF 21A.
107. *Ibid.*; E and D, Vol. III, p. 297 takes the word *rejaleh* used by Afif as *chehaleh* and translates it as swamp, but Prof. Hodivala points out that the word *rejaleh* is quite correct, and it means 'virile, or stalwart fighting men, infantry.' See *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, p. 313.
108. Barani, p. 593.
109. Afif, p. 112.
110. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
111. Robert Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*, p. 237.
112. Barani, pp. 327-28.
113. "This land of infidelity", says Khusrav, "was made to look like a cloth market owing to the innumerable tents." *Khaza'inu'l-Futuh*, (Eng. trans. by Habib), p. 63.
114. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-69.
115. Barani, pp. 330-32.
116. *Idem.*
117. *Ibid.*, pp. 328-29.
118. *Ibid.*, p. 448; *Futuh*, pp. 884-90. Prataprudra was made a prisoner by the Delhi army and was sent to Delhi. He died on the way and his son Krishnan or Virabhadra became the king. See also the *Historical Inscriptions of Southern India* collected till 1923 by Robert Sewell, edited by S. K. Aiyangar, p. 183; *South India and Her Muhammad Invaders*, p. 180; E and D, Vol. III, p. 367.
119. *Futuh*, p. 225.
120. *Ibid.*, p. 417.
121. *E.I.M.*, 1919-20. See also Ferishta (Briggs translation), Vol. I, p. 437, f.n. 1.
122. It has been shown by Sewell that Tagaomamede of Nuniz is the same as Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, and Nagundi mentioned by him is the same as Anagundi or Kampili. See *A Forgotten Empire*, p. 11.
123. Ferishta, p. 241; *Futuh*, pp. 411-16.
124. The kingdom was destroyed in 1327-28. Sewell is wrong in placing the date for the capture of the fort of Kampili in 1334. See *Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq*, p. 145; N. V. Ramanyya, *Kampili and Vijayanagar*, p. 14; *Futuh*, pp. 414-17.
125. Sewell has identified the Enbiquymelly of Nuniz with Malik Naib. But there was no Malik Naib under Muhammad bin Tughluq. According to Mr. Venkat Ramanyya he was probably Malik Muhammad who figures in the wars against Aravidu Chiefs. It would perhaps be nearer to truth to construe the term as designation by which the Portuguese traveller preferred to call the governor, and not a personal name. See *A Forgotten Empire*, p. 19, and N. V. Ramanyya, *Early Muslim Expansion*, p. 158.

126. See *ante*.
127. *A Forgotten Empire*, p. 127.
128. According to Mr. Venkat Ramanyya this event took place in 1330 A.D.
129. *Rehla*, p. 96. We must however bear in mind that Ibn Battuta speaks of eleven brothers who have been converted to Islam, while all subsequent documents that refer to Vijaynagar brothers speak only of five brothers as if they were five and no more. See *Vijaynagar Sex Centenary Volume* (Dharwar, 1936), p. 10.
130. *Barani*, p. 484.
131. According to one theory these two brothers were employees of the Kakatiya king and had fled from Warangal in 1323. They had taken shelter with the Raja of Kampili from where they were taken as prisoners by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq who released them later on and gave them charge of the administration of Kampili. Another account however states that the family of five brothers were sons of Sangama, a Yadava chief, and were employed by Ballal III as governors of different parts of his kingdom. See *Historical Inscriptions of South India*, pp. 184-85; *Southern India and Her Muhamadan Invaders*, p. 150; *Early Muslim Expansion*, pp. 181-82.
132. *Historical Inscriptions of Southern India*, pp. 185-86.
133. *Ibid.* Ferishta, Vol. I, p. 246.
134. *Report of Epigraphy, Madras* (1899-1909), pp. 21-26; See also *Historical Inscriptions of Southern India*, p. 177.

CHAPTER VII

POLITICS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

I

Some Aspects of Rural Politics

In the rural areas the State had to impose its authority on the erstwhile rulers, the Hindu chiefs and kings. Even when they submitted to Muslim rule, the Hindu upper class retained largely the real power in the countryside. The problem of controlling the Hindu upper class, the Thakurs¹, who, prior to the Turkish conquest of the country, had formed the ruling class, engrossed the attention of the Turkish rulers to a great extent. The Hindu upper class has been referred to by our chroniclers by various terms such as Rais, Ranas, Rawats, *Mugaddams*, Khuts, Chaudhris. The word *Rai* is used for powerful Hindu rulers like Jaichand, the Gahadavala King, by contemporary chroniclers.² Later on, the word *Rai* came to be used for a tributary chief. The word *Mugaddam* is an Arabic term meaning the first man.³ The former enjoyed internal autonomy and paid a fixed tribute whereas the latter collected and assessed revenue for the Government as its agents. The word *Mugaddam* has been applied to men of note as well as village headmen. Another important intermediary of the countryside was the Khut. Moreland concludes that the Khut was a Hindu chief subject to the Sultan.⁴ It is doubtful whether the Khut can be called a landlord because his duty seems to be collection and remittance of revenue to the local treasury. Prof. Hodivala identifies a Khut with the Sanskrit word *Gramhuta* or village headman.⁵ The word has been used by Barani also in the sense of a village headman.⁶ Another important man of the village was the Chaudhury who acted as the head of the villagers. Ibn Battuta informs us that the Chaudhury is the head of a Sadi which is a collection of hundred villages, and the Chaudhury is the chief of the local infidels.⁷

The difficulty of collecting taxes and tributes forced the Turkish Sultan to rely largely upon the local and territorial influence of Hindu rulers. The Rais enjoyed real power in the countryside. The influence of the Turkish conquerors was confined to and around the cities and fortified places garrisoned

by them. The Turkish rulers demanded from the Rais tribute, and were satisfied if it was paid regularly. Even after the defeat and death of Prithviraj Chauhan in 1192, his son was reinstated on the throne at Ajmer and was kept in power with the help of Muslim arms.⁸ In later days also the Sultans sent their expeditions against Hindu kings with practically the same purpose, viz., to exact tribute. Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji gave the alternative of submission and payment of tribute to Prataprudradeva, the ruler of Warangal.⁹ Khusraw Khan was despatched to the south with practically similar instruction by Sultan Mubarak Khalji.¹⁰ The Rais or Hindu rulers of India who had to submit to the superior arms of the Turkish rule paid tribute but retained their local authority. At the earliest possible opportunity they used to stop paying tribute and declare their independence, and it had become usual to undertake campaigns against them in each succeeding generation to exact tribute.¹¹

Sometimes the co-operation of a Rai was secured at any cost to eliminate a powerful rebel or enemy. When Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban went to Bengal, to suppress the rebellion of the provincial governor Malik Tughril Khan, the Sultan took care to enlist the support of Rai Danuj of Sunargaon. According to Yahya, prior to his interview with the Sultan, Rai Danuj had requested the Sultan to receive him standing. The Sultan was in need of the co-operation of the powerful chief, but was not ready to accord him the honour of being received at the court with the Sultan himself on his legs. In accordance with the advice of Malik Nek Tars, it was arranged that the Sultan should sit with a falcon on the throne, and on the approach of the Rai set the bird in motion, so that people would surmise that the Sultan had left the seat to let the falcon go, and the petition of the Rai would be granted. The reception of the Rai was done accordingly and his co-operation was received.¹² It appears that much importance was given by an able statesman like Sultan Balban to the sentiment of local Hindus and Ranas. The co-operation of the Rai was of immense value to keep rebellious governors and Maliks under control. The co-operation of the Rana of Mandal and Teri helped Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq to apprehend some of the followers of the rebel Taghi. The Ranas and Hindu chiefs and *Muqaddams* promised Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq all help against the rebel leader.¹³ The tributary Rais also helped the Sultan sometime to conquer the territory of their independent brethren. Thus Ramchandradeva of Devagiri gave all possible help to Malik Kafur against Warangal.¹⁴

The administration of the rural areas not directly under Turkish rule was mostly in the hands of these tributary Rais. Whenever time and the situation proved favourable they stopped paying the tribute. In the later days of the Tughluq rule, the influence of the Sultan did not extend far beyond the confines of the capital.³⁶ The Hindus stopped paying the poll tax and the influence of the Sultans ceased in the countryside.³⁷ Their opposition or co-operation was a major factor in maintaining the peace on the countryside.

Next in importance comes the *Mugaddams* and the village headman. The Turkish rulers had to rely to a large extent upon their co-operation for keeping the day-to-day administration going. The village headman was an important person in most parts of India, and if a ruler wanted to rehabilitate a village and restore cultivation, then "he would hardly succeed without taking pains to trace out a genuine representative of the old patel's family to head the returning party. If another headman had to be appointed it was always understood that he would vacate the post directly a real descendant made his appearance".³⁷

The growth of the power of the Hindu upper class was feared, and it was against the power and wealth of the upper class Hindu that Barani often warns the Muslim rulers of India. Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji in his discussion with Qazi Mughisu'd-Din observed that the Khuts and *Mugaddams* rode upon fine horse, wore fine clothes, made war upon each other, and went out hunting, though they paid not a *fital* to the treasury as tax. They levied separately the Khut's share from the villages, gave parties and drank wine, and many of them paid no revenue either on demand or without demand. The Sultan, therefore, decided to reduce them to obedience.³⁸

The use of the word *Hindu* by Barani is often misleading. It refers to the upper class Hindus and not the peasants and the poor.³⁹ The growth of the power of the upper class Hindu was feared because in case of an alliance between the patricians and plebeians of the Indian Society, the basis of the Turkish rule in India would be shaken to the root. Therefore from the very beginning of their inroad in this country the Turkish rulers of India were careful to prevent such an alliance. The policy was to keep the *ra'iyats* in their favour. Such a policy was dictated by the fear of rebellion and the possibility of allowing the upper strata of Hindu society to become too powerful for the ruler. The Sultan could neither dispense with the service of these Hindu intermediaries nor allow them to be too powerful.

The growth of the power of the local Hindu intermediaries

endangered the authority of the State in two days. In the first place allowing the local Hindu chiefs to accumulate wealth and power encouraged rebellious spirit. In the second place, driving the common tillers and toilers to extremes due to their exploitation created wide-spread discontent among them against the administration. Sometimes slack administration and lack of contact with the masses²⁰ led to the danger of common and united stand of the local Hindu chiefs and the common peasantry. The possibility of escaping the burden of taxation by withholding the revenue to a weak ruler and, if need be, against the local Muslim garrison often led to rebellion. The anarchy in the countryside and the lack of safety of the roads at times of rebellion may be well understood when we hear that Ibn Battuta fell in the hands of the Hindus near Aligarh and was made a prisoner. Seventy-eight of his escorts were killed by the Hindus. Knowing that they do not kill a person who surrenders, he submitted to them and with difficulty escaped imprisonment.²¹

The Indian peasantry have been very often branded as helpless spectators to their oppression and exploitation. They have been branded as dumb dolls without any power to protest against the actions taken for or against them. The history of India is accordingly presented as a history of unstinted despotism and tyranny of her kings and rulers as well as of the heartless tax-farmer and speculator and the middleman over millions of peasants who were merely hewers of wood and drawers of water.²² In the middle ages the common men in the countryside were far less politically conscious than they are today. Yet if there was any check on the exploitation and naked oppression of the ruler and his agents, the Muqti' or Wali, the revenue collector and the tax-farmers, as also the Hindu chiefs, it was the fear of driving the peasant to the extreme.²³

Democracy in the modern sense of the term, or even in the sense in which it existed in early Greek cities, was not of course in existence in mediaeval India. But the Indian people living in the villages enjoyed a timeless democracy, scarcely disturbed before the contact with the British industrial civilisation. No central control ever existed over these little republics scattered all over India, and inhabited by the majority portion of its population. "The village communities", said Sir Charles Metcalfe, "are little republics having nearly everything that they can want within themselves and almost independent of any foreign relations."²⁴ Such an organisation is bound to develop political apathy and in India after the Turkish conquest these

village communities were left intact. Life in the village flowed in its accustomed channel, scarcely disturbed by any change in the political arena.

But yet any attempt on the part of the ruler to transgress the limit set by immemorial custom and tradition, by increasing the tax or in any other way, usually faced opposition of which contemporary history makes but casual reference. It was not always safe for any despotic ruler to indulge in any arbitrary act which was not accepted by time-old tradition and sanctioned by custom. The conditions of life in the middle ages demanded a close co-operation among villagers, not only for carrying out economic and social activities but also for defence. This union of the villagers was enforced by the facts of common life, common ties and often common descent. This union preserved the villages in their internecine feuds and against the armies that visited North India.²⁵ The preservation of the village community for better or worse in India through so many centuries of changes and turmoil was not merely due to the policy and tendency of each succeeding conqueror who came to establish their rule in this country, but it must have been largely due to the fact that the villagers in India resisted any attempt to infringe on their way of life.

The co-operation of the villagers was essential for any restoration of cultivation and that co-operation could only be secured when the rulers agreed to restore normal conditions. To the rulers of mediaeval India, restoration of cultivation, in case of desertion due to excessive demand or any similar act of tyranny, presented a serious problem. Their problem can be appreciated when we remember that there was abundance of cultivable land in this sub-continent in the middle ages. Land revenue administration was dominated by the fact that the supply of land was much larger than the demand for it.²⁶ Therefore the aim of the administration was to keep the peasants attached to the land. In case of excessive taxation or inhuman oppression, there was every chance of depopulation of the countryside, because the peasantry simply moved away as a mark of protest to new and virgin soil, and the State or its agents for collecting revenue had to face bankruptcy. It was the fear of the loss of revenue and consequent depletion of treasury that to a large extent guided the State revenue policy and curbed the greed and oppression of the ruling class. In an age when State income depended mainly on revenue from land, the confiscation of the peasants' property for realization of dues or as a punitive measure was unprofitable and it was

more so because of the plentiness of land. Besides, confiscation had the danger of creating a desperate band of refractory subjects disturbing the peace and order of the locality, and in those days when the country abounded in forests it would be wellnigh impossible to punish them.

In fact, it was the accepted policy of the Muslim conquerors everywhere to leave much of the conquered land to the local population for fear that, in case the Muslim soldiers took to land, there was every possible chance for them of losing their martial quality. When a place is conquered by force of arms the Imam may divide the property taken, whether land or chattels, after the deduction of the State's share of one fifth, among the victorious army; he may, if he chooses, leave the lands in the hands of the original holders, and impose upon their person the *jizyah*, and upon their lands the *kharaj*. If these lands, say the Hanafites, is distributed among the soldiers they will settle down and would stay away from holy war, and the enemy would return to charge upon the Muslims.²⁷ Thus the land was left to the peasants in India, in exchange of a definite part of the harvest as a tribute to the Muslim treasury, and they remained bound to pay the *kharaj* for all time.²⁸

In leaving the peasants in undisturbed possession of land, the Turkish conquerors in India were merely carrying forward a tradition long established in this soil. In Rajputana the tenure of land obtained by the cultivator was held more sacred than the grant of the sovereign. Whereas the aggregate signiorial right might be lost due to the vicissitudes of fortune or of favour, the right of the Bhumia, the allodial tenant of the Rajput feudal system, cannot be dismissed.²⁹ The right of usufruct of the land possessed by the peasantry could not be taken away, whether or not the ruler by dint of conquest or force desired such a right.³⁰

If any ruler touched this traditionally accepted right of the peasant on the soil, he ran the risk of both economic ruin and peasant uprising. In India, the rural people scarcely took any interest in the day-to-day politics, or in the change of dynasties; but because they shouldered the whole economic burden of a mainly agricultural country, in case of any fundamental change affected by the State in its revenue policy or economic outlook, the ruling class had to take into consideration the reaction that would follow in the myriads of villages scattered throughout this sub-continent. It was not merely due to a philanthropic motive that the State often undertook the task of ameliorating

the condition of the peasants, who have even been called the treasurers of the treasury of the Muslims.³¹

The fear of popular rebellion in the countryside checked partly the greed of the State as well as its agencies for collection of dues, and because in mediaeval times there was no restriction regarding the possession of arms, armed uprisings could not be easily suppressed. In the absence of fire arms, the regular soldiers mostly used the sword, the spear, and other equipments and weapons mostly available to the ordinary rebels. The regular soldiers, however, had at their disposal the horse, the elephant, and the Greek fire as also siege engines which the ordinary people could never secure. But on all other points, there was scarcely any difference between the armed rabble and the army.³² The people were accustomed to carrying of arms on their persons for self-defence. Thus Ab'ul Fazl informs us that in Malwa, "the peasants and even grain-dealers are never without arms".³³ On such a population it was not at all easy for the Muqti' or Wali or the revenue farmers to impose anything which was against their accepted tradition and custom.

II

Peasantry and the Land Revenue Policy

In India the whole economic structure of the country depended upon the tiller of the soil whose labour provided the Hindu kings and their successors, the Muslim sovereigns of Hindustan with the luxury and ease in which they basked. The rulers of India always tried to flourish by squeezing the peasantry to the utmost. The peasants had to face the twin demons of the State demand for land revenue, and the organized plunder of the tax-gatherers, officials and other agents of the State whom Kalhan compares with cholera, the colic and snake.³⁴

The land revenue system of mediaeval India after the Turkish conquest did not mark a serious break with the system that prevailed in this country prior to their conquest. In the Muslim land revenue administration, there was provision for measurement and sharing, and for intermediaries for tax collection prevalent in the Hindu system. After the conquest of a country the inhabitants, who were allowed to continue in undisturbed possession of their fields, were asked to pay the

treasury a part of the harvest, the *kharaj*. The *kharaj* is of two kinds: "The proportional *kharaj* (*kharaj muqasamah*) and the fixed *kharaj* (*kharaj wazifah or muwazzaf*)".³⁶ The proportional *kharaj* is a system of land taxation under which a share of the crops actually grown is paid to the State Treasury. The *kharaj-i-wazifah* is a fixed payment without reference to the actual produce. The former is sharing, and the latter measurement, and both were in accordance with the system prevalent in this country.

The Turkish conquerors understood that no government can run without revenue and income being regularly ensured. In the words of Barani "It is not possible to rule without revenue."³⁷ Naturally the aim of the Turkish rulers was to gain revenue from the peasants, and to squeeze as much as possible from them so that they were sometimes left with one cow only³⁷, and thus to provide for the upkeep of the State. Statesmanship however demanded a policy in revenue matters which would ensure for the State a maximum of income, but at the same time preserve the peasant so that he might continue to supply the ruling class with the sinews of war and peace.

From the very beginning the Turkish rulers of India were eager, therefore, to preserve the peasantry and enunciate a policy under which they might continue tilling the soil. In different periods of the Sultanate, this policy of squeezing and at the same time preserving the geese that laid golden eggs is visible like a thread. Balban in his instruction to his son Bughra Khan asked him to keep in comfort the soldiers, the peasants and the traders.³⁸ The same monarch wanted to follow in revenue matters a policy by which all chance of rebellion might be eliminated. He told his son: "Also while collecting revenue from the subjects a middle policy should be followed. The collection should not be so high as to make the subjects destitute or should not be so low as to make them store up much and thus become disobedient and turn their face from allegiance."³⁹ The above instruction of Sultan Ghiyas'ud-Din Balban should be understood in the context of the conditions prevailing in those days under which the central authorities collected revenue through the middle man who took a considerable share of the revenue. The peasants in many cases paid the revenue to the Hindu chiefs and *Muqaddams*. The tiller bore sometimes an extra burden in addition to the revenue to be paid to the treasury of the Sultan for the perquisites charged by the local chiefs and revenue collectors.⁴⁰ The policy was to see that the peasants might defray the

expenditure from the land, and that the demand made by the State as also its collectors might not make him destitute. Perhaps that is what the Sultan meant by his desire to keep the peasants in comfort. The fear of rebellion, however, in case of growth of power and wealth, haunted the mind of the ruling class. In the early period, therefore, the policy pursued was to strike a middle course⁴¹, and not to become too rigorous or too lenient for assessing and collecting the revenue. The possibility of rebellion in the rural areas either from the upper class Hindus or from the *ra'iyats* was kept in view while enunciating policy in revenue matters.

For the first time in the history of Muslim rule in India, Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji introduced the system of measurement, and raised the state demand to fifty per cent of the produce. This is no doubt a high rate of charge, and must have caused much hardship for the peasantry. This rigorous demand was enforced with an equal rigour by Sharf Qa'i, the Na'ib Wazir who enforced it upon every village in the kingdom, in such a way that none escaped from it.⁴² In addition to this demand the people had to pay taxes on pasturable animals and tax on every house.⁴³ Thus the common man in the rural area was heavily burdened with taxes.

Again, the economic regulations of the Sultan enjoined the producers of the soil to sell their surplus to the merchants, at a rate lower than the fixed price of the foodstuffs at Delhi. Thus the peasants were left with little or no profit even from the surplus they had after paying the land revenue and after meeting their own demands. The Sultan of course allowed the peasants to come to the market and sell their goods there.⁴⁴ But in those days when communication and conveyance presented grave difficulties, it was not an alluring prospect for the peasant to avail himself of the opportunity, which, due to the expense of the journey, did not ensure much profit.

It was the aim of the Sultan to enforce his regulations with utmost rigour and he, therefore, allowed no one to regrade. The regulations were so strictly enforced that no merchant, farmer, corn-chandler or anyone else, could hold back secretly even a maund of grain and sell it in his shop for a *dang* or *dirham* above the regulated price. In Doab the cultivators were not even allowed to carry their surplus corn from the field to their houses, but had to sell their produce, at a low price, to the merchants who had thus no excuse for neglecting to bring the corn into the capital.⁴⁵ The rate at which the peasant sold his goods was lower than the rate fixed at Delhi,

otherwise the merchants could not have been allowed a profit after paying for the conveyance. This being so, the peasant who had to purchase the necessities of life from places where goods were not always available at fixed rate as at Delhi suffered a double loss. He sold his goods at a low rate, and purchased his necessities at a high price. The prices must have been higher than those at the capital, because the supply of food-stuffs and other articles to the capital must have resulted in a shortage of supply in other less important places. Barani expresses wonder at the fact that in spite of famine and want of rain there was no rise of price at Delhi. Corn was brought out either from the royal granaries or imported by the dealers.⁴⁰ So much was supplied and stored at the capital by sucking the countryside that Delhi did not feel the pinch of famine or draught.

But in spite of these excessive demands and strict regulations of the Sultan there was no outbreak of disturbance nor was there any crisis in agricultural economy. The peasant though pressed by the State was helped against his immediate taskmaster, the rural aristocracy. The State was not the sole exploiter of the peasants. The intermediaries including revenue collectors, the Hindu *Muqaddams* and Chaudhuries, the tax-farmers and various other sections of people connected with the collection of revenue, stood between the State and the peasants. They played a double role, by enriching themselves at the cost of the cultivators, and at the same time depriving the State of its proper dues. Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji wanted to realize for the State every farthing collected as state due from the peasants, and did not allow anyone to profit at the expense of either the cultivator or the state. His Na'ib Wazir Sharf Qu'i ascertained from the books of the Patwaris every single *jital* due from the collectors and other revenue officers. Blows, confinement, imprisonment, and chains were employed to enforce payment.⁴¹

The Hindu upper class also was reduced to straits and lost their former wealth and splendour, because the Sultan ruled that there was to be one rule for the payment of revenue applicable to all from the Khuts to the balahar, and the heaviest burden should not fall upon the poor, but should fall equally upon all. He also regulated that the burden of the strong should not fall upon the weak (*Az Khut wa Balahar dar dadan-i-kharaj yak hukum paida aiyad wa kharaj-i-aqviya bar zu'afa niustad*; Barani, p. 287). As a result of these regulations the Chaudhuries, Khuts and *Muqaddams* were not able to ride

horses or use fine cloths, and even their wives, driven by destitution, had to serve as maids in the house of others.

The measures mentioned above were directed against the Hindu upper class, but Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji did not spare his coreligionists whose grants were seized by him. Even the *in'am*, and *waqf* land granted as rewards to the Muslims were confiscated and made *khalsa* or crown land, and those who were enjoying the privilege so long, of these lands, were deprived of it.⁴⁸ Amir Khusraw informs us that he remitted the due from the *ra'iyat* and seized the accumulated property of the Hindus.⁴⁹ Ferishta complains that the Sultan took away the property of the Hindus and Muslims alike.⁵⁰ It appears that the policy of the Sultan was to crush the 'oppressive exploitation of the officials and intermediaries on the cultivators, and to eliminate all the competitors of the State in fleecing the peasants. The Sultan enforced a heavy burden of taxation, but at the same time he saw to it that the peasant was not burdened by others. Thus a far-reaching change was effected in the countryside, and the various types of intermediaries and land interests that had cropped up in the rural area were checked. The cultivator at least henceforth served only one master, and not so many small tyrants that hitherto had wielded real power in the rural area. This point is important because it accounts for the success of the Sultan in carrying out his economic policy in the countryside. Failure to appreciate this secret of his success baffled others later on to realize high rates of taxation, due largely to the opposition of the peasantry. His son Sultan Qutbu'd-Din Mubarak Khalji neglected revenue matters, and a relaxation of the strict regulation of the previous reign, led to the reappearance of the intermediaries.⁵¹ But he reduced the burden of taxation⁵², and during his reign the country saw neither famine nor Mongol invasion.⁵³ The expenditure incurred by the State for maintaining a large army to stem the tide of Mongol raids from the north-west was no longer necessary, and the people were relieved of the irksome regulations of the previous reign.⁵⁴

The claim of Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq on the throne was based on slender grounds, and he was therefore eager to keep the governors and Malik and Amirs satisfied, and was ready to forego a part of the State's share due from them. These officials were allowed to keep a small portion of the *kharaaj* and their subordinates too were allowed to keep one or half per cent over and above their salary.⁵⁵ Thus the Sultan eager to secure his position on the throne, was not in favour

of enforcing stringent and severe laws to realize the dues of the State from the Malikis and Amirs. The Sultan gave instruction that "an increase of more than one tenth or one eleventh on the provinces and country by surmise and guess work or on the reports of spies and the representation of enhancement mongers" should not be made.⁵⁶

But the Sultan was very much alive to the factors of opposition in the rural areas, and tried his best to free the peasants from oppression by the tax-farmers and other intermediaries. Barani says that tax-farmers were not allowed to approach the *Diwan-i-wizarat*. The Hindus were to be taxed so that they might not be blinded with wealth and so become discontented and rebellious, nor, on the other hand, be reduced to poverty and destitution as to be unable to pursue their husbandry.⁵⁷ The Hindus here refers to the Khuts and *Mugaddams* for whom the Sultan wanted to follow a middle policy, i.e., a policy not too severe or lenient. The interest of the cultivator however forced him to keep a watch on the *Mugaddams* and Khuts who were prevented from making any additional demand on the peasant.⁵⁸ He encouraged the cultivator to stick to his land and extend cultivation. He decreed that the Khuts and *Mugaddams* should not be allowed to make a separate assessment. The policy pursued by Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq was very much different from that of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji. The latter had introduced measurement, the former sharing.⁵⁹ The Khalji Sultan had not given concession to the Malikis or the chiefs, but the founder of the Tughluq dynasty allowed the Malikis a certain concession.⁶⁰ But, in principle, both wanted to keep the tiller of the soil to his side. The circumstances in the Tughluq period were however different, and as no serious foreign invasion threatened the country, there was no need for maintaining a large army, and charging a high rate of revenue.

Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq's policy in the rural areas was a departure from the policy pursued by his predecessors. This departure lies not in the fact of his increasing the cesses and dues in Doab, but in the way he enforced them. The enhancement of the dues has been described by Barani⁶¹ as

Yak bahdah wa yaki bah bist

This sentence has been taken as an increase of ten or five per cent more⁶², and literally it may be taken to mean an increase of ten or twenty fold, both of which appear impossible.⁶³ According to Hajju'd-Dabir, there was an extra-

ordinary enhancement of the *kharaaj* and for every *tanka* claimed in the previous reign 3 or 4 *tankas* were demanded.⁶⁴ It appears that the demand was out of proportion but the exact amount of enhancement of the dues cannot be ascertained. According to Sir Wolsely Haig, "The extent of the enhancement is uncertain. The statement that the enhancement was increased ten fold and twenty fold is almost certainly hyperbolic."⁶⁵ According to Yahya, in addition to these enhancement of dues the Sultan also imposed the pasture and the house tax.⁶⁶

The enhancement of the dues in the Doab led to a great suffering of the *ra'i'yats*. This increase of state demand was later coupled unfortunately with the recurrence of famine and want of rain. The people became destitutes and as a result disaffection spread⁶⁷ which so enraged the Sultan that he ordered the plundering of places like Baran⁶⁸, and the condition of the people became worse. Cultivation suffered a great deal because many left off tilling the soil and took shelter in the jungle, after they had, "burnt their stocks of corn and turned out their domestic animals". As an answer to the excesses committed by the State, the peasants in the Doab organized on their own initiative resistance, and Doab, the granary of Delhi and its suburbs, became a seat of a sort of civil war.⁶⁹ This resistance was organized spontaneously, and in the civil war that followed much bloodshed on both sides took place. The Sultan employed Amirs of centuries to suppress the peasants. The latter no doubt suffered a great deal at their hands, but the royal army also had to pay the price. The ordinary revenue collectors and local chiefs were also oppressed due to the exaggerated demand of the State.⁷⁰ Their attempt to realize the dues from the peasants had failed, and the employment of the Amirs of centuries also it appears did not quell the uprising in the Doab, and the Sultan had to lose a large revenue, as also his prestige in being unable to carry out his plan due to the non-co-operation of the peasantry.

The increase of demand on the part of the State was not a new phenomenon in mediaeval India, yet we find that it led to serious disturbances in the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, and eclipsed the glory and dignity of the State.⁷¹ Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji had raised the state demand to one half of the produce yet that did not result in such a chain of adverse reaction. Various causes like the disbanding of the Khurasan army, the vitiated political atmosphere of the country due to the rebellion of Bahau'd-Din Gureshasp and Kishli

Khan, as also the indignation of the 'Ulamas and Shaikhs has been ascribed for the failure of the Sultan to carry out his policy.⁷⁴ But during the days of Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji too taxes were enhanced, a large army was maintained, the Mongols repeatedly invaded the country, rebellions took place and famine visited the land, yet cultivation was not left off by the peasantry of the Doab. The peasants in the latter reign had to sell their surplus to the agents of the government, over and above the payment of the enhanced taxation. The relaxation in the taxation made by Sultan Qutbu'd-Din Mubarak Khalji were not very substantial; the large army maintained during the previous reign had become redundant and were naturally disbanded. But we do not hear of any uprising organized by the peasants together with the turbulent element of the disbanded army.⁷⁵ Neither famine nor enhancement of taxation nor the disbandment of the army can account for the turbulence and rebellion of the peasants of the Doab.

The reason for the failure of Sultan Mohammad bin Tughluq is to be sought in his failure to control his agents for the collection of land revenue. It was an unstatesmanlike act on the part of the Sultan to strike simultaneously all sections of people by his oppressive land revenue policy. The revenue collectors and trustworthy local chiefs as also the peasants felt alike the excessive demand of the Sultan.⁷⁶ The Sultan did not make any distinction in his revenue policy. But at the same time he failed to guard the interest of the *ryots* as against the oppression of the revenue collectors and local chiefs who must have pressed them for realization of additional dues over and above the State demand. He made no provision to protect the weak from the strong, and to check the excesses committed by the revenue collectors. The Sultan became angry and lost no time in taking strong measure. According to Barani, under the order of the Sultan the Faujdar laid waste the country and killed some Khuts and *Muqaddams*, and many escaped to the jungle. Haju'd-Dabir, on the other hand, says that the Amirs of the centuries killed many *ra'iyats* who in turn killed these officers.⁷⁸ The failure to carry out his project due to opposition had enraged the Sultan who punished the local Hindu chiefs for their failure to realize the dues and the peasants for their turbulence. Thus all were estranged from him, and the whole country seethed with rebellion. The policy of the Sultan, it appears, had led to an alliance among all who desired to escape the heavy demand of the State. The peasants and the upper class Hindus being alike oppressed by

the Sultan resisted the regular army and the turmoil resulted in the abandonment of agriculture, destruction and burning of corns, desertion of villages, as also armed conflict and the State lost not only its revenue but also its prestige.

Added to the rigorousness of the Sultan was the corruption of the officials. The best proof of official corruption comes from the failure of the Sultan to improve agriculture due largely to the misappropriation of the state fund by the officials. Sultan Muhanmad bin Tughluq in his later days had tried to improve agriculture, and to carry out this plan he strove to restore cultivation, dug wells, and advanced loans from the treasury to promote cultivation. He even opened a fresh department called the *Diwan-i-Amir-i-Kuhi* for carrying out his projects. But he failed to carry out his projects because the officials, entrusted with distribution of the loans, enriched themselves but did not spend the money for reclaiming waste land or for improving cultivation. In course of two years about seventy lakhs of *tanhas* were spent from the public treasury but not a hundredth or thousandth part of what was disbursed was reproduced in agriculture.⁷⁶ Due to the corruption of his employees the Sultan was baffled in all his efforts to improve agriculture.

The corruption of the officials, the Sultan's lack of understanding of the cross currents of rural politics and economics, and his failure to grasp the problems of his age, completely frustrated his efforts, and won for him opprobrium from all quarters. His plan for increasing the taxes by itself was not an unpractical measure, but he failed to work out the details.

The days of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq saw the granting of the fiefs on a liberal scale. The Sultan distributed villages and lands among his Khans, Maliks, and soldiers. According to *Shams-i-Siraj-Arif* :

"In the reign of former rulers of Delhi it had never been the rule to bestow villages as stipends upon office-bearers. The author has understood from various historians that Sultan 'Alau'd-Din used to speak of the practice with disapprobation, and say that in every village granted there would be two or three hundred residents all of whom would receive pay (from the grantee). Such a number of pensioners would give rise to pride and insubordination, and if they were to act in concert, there would be danger of rebellion." The efforts of Sultan Balban to resume the grants of the Shamsi slaves, and the confiscation of the *in'am*, and *waqf* land by Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji bear out the truth of this statement. Sultan Firuz Shah

Tughluq disregarded the policy hitherto pursued and granted not only land among followers, but also made it hereditary in the family.⁷⁸ During his reign a large part of the country was under the control of the grantees.

Not only the grantees, but also the speculators, and tax-farmers made hay during his rule. Soldiers, who were supplied with assignments upon revenue, used to sell these assignments in the city at one-third of their value, to the brokers who received one-half from fief-holders in the province, the other half being retained by the fief-holders.⁷⁹ These brokers enriched themselves at the cost of common soldiers. Not only the brokers but the Malikis, Khans and influential men at the court enriched and strengthened themselves, because Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq succumbed to their demand of granting lands and fiefs. The reign of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq, therefore, has been acclaimed as happy and prosperous by contemporary writers who were in sympathy with this class.⁸⁰

The speculators were very busy in this reign. In the year 1376-77 A.D. one Shamsu'd-Din Damghani offered annually forty lakhs of *tanhas*, hundred elephants, two hundred Arab horses and four hundred slaves over and above the normal revenue from Gujrat. The Governor of Gujrat at that time was Darya Khan, the son of Zafar Khan, who had succeeded to the title and post of his father.⁸¹ The governor and his Na'ib refused to pay the amount offered by Damghani and in consequence were removed from the post.⁸² Damghani then received rewards including a silver palanquin, and was appointed as governor of Gujrat. In no time, however, he proved to be a failure, because he could not raise the amount promised, and naturally raised the standard of revolt which was however easily suppressed.⁸³ The failure of Damghani must have been due to the opposition of the taxpayers. The callousness of the Sultan towards the interest of his subjects is quite apparent, in this case, because no question of the happiness of his subjects bothered him when he allowed Damghani to fleece the people of Gujrat to the utmost to keep the terms of his contract.

Again, the eulogists of Firuz assert that there was no famine in his reign, yet Shamsi Siraj Afif in one place mentions that occasionally prices rose up to even one *tanha* per maund due to hard season or want of rain, though he hastens to add that it lasted only for a short time.⁸⁴ This admission coupled with the fact that the Sultan allowed free scope to the speculators, tax-farmers and assignees show that his subjects were

not so happy as the contemporary chronicles would have us believe.

The reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq, however, did not see any serious uprising of the peasants and the plebeians of the rural area, because of the general prosperity. The *Khut* and *Muqaddams*, says Barani, had enough of grain, horse and domestic animals.⁸⁵ Thousands of villages became populated, and domestic animals increased.⁸⁶ The Sultan had instructed that the *kharaj* or *jizyah* should not be exacted by oppressing the subjects, and none should be forced to pay too much of taxes though this rule, as has been already shown, was not always strictly followed.⁸⁷ He had abolished a number of unlawful taxes, and undertaken many public works including the digging of canals.⁸⁸ But the policy of granting land, and the laxity of the state in controlling the *Khans*, *Maliks*, and the revenue farmers sowed the seed for the disintegration of the empire. Even from the last days of the Sultan, the power of the *Khans* and *Maliks* increased, and civil war between contending parties for gaining influence at the court started. The death of the Sultan released centrifugal forces that were so long held in check due to the prestige of the old Sultan.⁸⁹

III

Conclusion

In the rural area outside the walled town, there lived the tiller who was the mainstay of the economic structure. In between the State and the peasant, there were erstwhile rulers the *Rais*, *Ranas*, *Muqaddams* and *Khuts*. These rural magnates and local chiefs enjoyed larger power, and were the agents through whom the States carried on the administration. There were again the assignees, the tax-farmers and *Muqti's*, those appointed directly by the conquerors. The age and circumstances were such that much depended upon these local intermediaries, and grantees of State. Again, in the rural area the State had to count the peasants' reaction to a particular measure relating to revenue matters. The upper class of indigenous rural landholders and intermediaries wielded in many respects feudal authority and their growth of power spelled nullification of state authority. The grantees too eager to fill their private purse were also inclined to strengthen their power and authority at the cost of the State. The latter had to work

its way ahead through a tangle of vested interest growing from below, in order to reach the peasant. Not that the State was benevolent towards the tiller, but it was eager to check misappropriation of its dues by the middleman. All these cross currents of semi-feudal forces always tended to divide the country into independent fiefs. The State had the problem of keeping in check these centrifugal forces not only from exploiting the tiller, but also from creating anarchy, and at the same time to gain their co-operation in rural administration.

The possibility of disaffection both in the cities and in the countryside forced the Sultans to respect customary rights and obligations. Not only the Sultans, the Maliks, the Muqti's, the revenue collectors and other State employees and agents were kept at bay for fear of popular discontent, and even rebellion. Many activities of the State, apart from collection of revenue and maintenance of peace and order, were undertaken to conciliate the people. The grandeur and dignity of the court was maintained to enhance the prestige of the Sultan in the eyes of the people. This of course must be understood in the background of mediaeval history when man was far less a political being than in modern times.

NOTES

1. *Chachnama*, pp. 155, 212 etc.
2. Sir Denison Ross (edited by), *Ta'rikh-i-Faikhru'd-Din Mubarak Shahi*, p. 23; *T-I-N*, p. 120.
3. E and D (reprinted by Cosmopolitan publishers, Aligarh), Vol. II. Introduction by Prof. Habib, p. 70.
4. *Agrarian System of Moslem India*, pp. 225-26.
5. *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, pp. 277-78.
6. *Ta'rikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 287.
7. *Rehla*, p. 123.
8. E and D, Vol. II, pp. 219-20.
9. *Khaza'in* (Eng. Trans.), p. 90.
10. W. Mirza (edited by), *Nuhshiphir*, pp. 84, 115. E and D, Vol. III, pp. 558-60.
11. Barani, p. 50.
12. *T.M.S.*, pp. 42-43.
13. Barani, pp. 520-21.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 328-29.

15. See Chap. V.
16. Col. Tod remarks that Babur, in spite of his victory over Ibrahim Lodi in 1526 A.D., could not establish his sway in Hindustan prior to his victory over Rana Sanga of Mewar who could have become supreme Chakravartin of India but for the invasion of Babur. Crooke (edited by), *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, Vol. I, pp. 439-50.
17. Baden Powell, *Origin and Growth of the Indian Village Community*, p. 12.
18. Barani, p. 291.
19. *Agrarian System of Moslem India*, p. 32 f.n. 2.
20. Barani, p. 282. Perhaps that is what Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji meant when he attributed the king's ignorance of the affairs of subjects as one of the causes of rebellions in his kingdom.
21. *Rehla*, pp. 154-60; *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, pp. 163-64.
22. Sir H. M. Elliot in his *Biographical Index to the Historians of Muhammadan India* (p. xxi) even went to the length of predicting India's perpetual subservience to foreign rule, basing himself on the inference that in the past Indian people had accepted everything imposed upon them from above. See also Moreland, *The Indian Peasant in History*. *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, April 28, 1929.
23. See W. C. Smith, *Lower Class Uprisings in the Mughal Empire*, Islamic Culture, Vol. XX, 1946.
24. Stated before a selected committee of the House of Commons in 1832. See the *Report of the Land Revenue Commission*, Bengal, Vol. II, p. 153. Sir Henry Maine compares the working system of Indian village communities with primitive European tenures and tillage. See *Village Communities in East and West*, p. 63.
25. *Origin and Growth of the Indian Village Community*, pp. 122, 139.
26. *Report of the Land Revenue Commission*, Bengal Vol. II, p. 158.
27. *Muhammadan Theories of Finance*, p. 410.
28. If a Muslim buy a *kharaj* land from the *Zimmi*, the land still pays the *kharaj* according to Hanafites. According to Malikites, however, the land becomes a tithe land. Those lands that are not left to the conqueror becomes public property; their proprietors are mere tenants paying a proportional *kharaj* commonly known as the tithe (*ushr*). They possess no right to sell or give away this land. *Ibid.*, pp. 374-75; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. II, pp. 38, 902-03, Vol. IV, p. 1050, supplementary, p. 154.
29. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (Crooke's ed.), Vol. I, pp. 575-76.
30. *I.H.C.*, 1942. I. H. Qureshi, *Ownership of the Agricultural Land in India*.
31. Barani, p. 574.
32. *Islamic Culture*, Oct. 1937. M. Akram Muqdam, *The Art of War in Mediaeval India*.
33. Col. H. S. Jarret (translated by), *A'in-i-Akhbari* and revised by Sir J. N. Sarkar, Vol. II, p. 307.
34. R. S. Pandit, *Rajtarangini* (Eng. trans.—*River of Kings*), p. 346.
35. *Muhammadan Theories of Finance*, p. 378.

36. Barani, p. 303.
37. Afif, p. 98.
38. Barani, p. 79.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
40. *Agrarian System of Moslem India*, pp. 26, 29.
41. Nizamu'd-Din Ahmad also records the words of Barani and says that Sultan Balban advised his son—"That in levying revenue from his subjects (a king) should follow the golden mean. He should not take so little that they would become refractory and turbulent; nor so much that they would be reduced to helplessness and poverty." *T-i-A*, p. 95; Eng. trans. by B. De, p. 111.
42. Barani, pp. 287-88.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 28; Barani uses the words *Chara'i* and *Ghari* which signify different taxes, one on pasturable animal and another on every house. See K. S. Lal, *History of the Khaljis*, p. 247, f.n. 14.
44. Barani, pp. 307-08.
45. *Idem*.
46. *Ibid.*, 306.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 288-89. According to Barani there was no chance of taking bribe either from the Hindu or from a Muslim, and punishment for taking 500 or 1000 *tankas* was imprisonment for years. So much coercion was put on the revenue employee that clerkship was considered to be a great crime and no man would give his daughter to a clerk.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
49. *Khaza'in* (Eng. trans.), p. 8.
50. *Ferishta*, Vol. I, p. 191.
51. *Agrarian System of Moslem India*, p. 40.
52. Barani, p. 38.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 387.
54. See *ante*.
55. Barani, p. 431.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 429; Sir W. Haig (*C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 128) states that the land tax was limited to 1/10th or 1/11th of the gross produce of the cultivation. Moreland (*Agrarian System of Moslem India*, p. 44) states that the above-mentioned 1/10th or 1/11th was a demand on the Provincial Governors and was levied on their revenue, not on the peasants.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 430.
58. *Idem*.
59. *Agrarian System of Moslem India*, pp. 44-45.
60. See *ante*.
61. Barani, p. 473.
62. E and D, Vol. III, p. 238.
63. Ishwari Prasad, *Mediaeval India* (War. ed.), p. 278; *Agrarian System of Moslem in India*, p. 48, f.n. 1.
64. Sir Denison Ross (edited by), *Zafaru'l-Walid*, Vol. III, p. 877.
65. *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 145.
66. *T.M.S.*, pp. 101-02.

67. *Barani*, pp. 473, 479-80.
68. The enhancement took place according to Mr. Moreland just before the transfer of the capital and the plundering of Baran took place in 1334. See *Agrarian System of Moslem India*, pp. 48-49.
69. *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 145.
70. *Zafaru'l-Walīh*, Vol. III, pp. 890, 897.
71. *Barani*, p. 473; *Ferishta*, Vol. I, p. 239; *T.M.S.*, pp. 113-14.
72. Dr. A. M. Husain, *Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq*, pp. 151-52.
73. Dr. Husain argues that the disbanded Khurasan army which was temporarily raised and which must have included the Hindus specially the warlike Rajputs, had created disturbances after their disbandment and the ryots made use of the military training they had received as temporary recruits in the army. The Khurasan army as also the army raised by Sultan 'Alau'd-Din Khalji might have included the Hindus. But certainly that does not explain the root cause of the Doab rebellion, because in the reign of the Khalji Sultans we do not hear of the ryots making use of their military training for rebellion against the state for enhancement of dues.
74. *Zafaru'l-Walīh*, Vol. III, p. 377.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 890; *Barani*, p. 479.
76. *Barani*, pp. 498-99.
77. *Ta'rikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 95.
78. See *ante*.
79. *Afif*, p. 295.
80. *Ibid.*; *Barani*, pp. 552-54, 571, 574 etc.
81. *T.M.S.*, p. 132.
82. Yahya gives the name of the Na'ib as Zia'u'l-Mulk Shamsu'd-Din Aburja *Ferishta* calls him simply Shamsu'd-Din Aburja. On another occasion Yahya had stated that he was entrusted with Sirhind. *Ibid.*, p. 130; *Ferishta*, Vol. I, p. 267.
83. *T.M.S.*, p. 132.
84. *Afif*, p. 293.
85. *Barani*, p. 554.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 558.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 574; *Afif*, p. 99.
88. See *ante*.
89. See *ante*.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TURBULENCE OF THE TRIBAL PEOPLE

The Sultanate in the middle ages had also to conciliate, control and keep in check the turbulent warlike and semi-independent tribes, and clans like the Khokhars¹, Jats, Meos and other similar people scattered all over the sub-continent. These fierce tribes and clans of India jealously guarded their rights and privileges, and for any real or 'supposed infringement on their right, and sometimes even without any provocation, they rose up in arms. Some of them like the Khokhars co-operated with foreign invaders like Sultan Jalalu'd-Din, the fugitive ruler of Khiva. Rebels like Qutlugh Khan, the step-father of Sultan Nasiru'd-Din, sought shelter with independent Hindu tribes of the Sub-Himalayan range, and the hilly tracts of Sirmur.² The Sultans had to undertake punitive expeditions to subjugate their turbulence, and penetrate in the tribal areas. Tribal opposition caused much trouble, and the Sultans were forced to be always on the alert to keep these unruly common folk under control.

Among these tribes the most prominent were the Khokhars who occupied a tract in the Salt Range, and the route between Lahore and Ghazna was often infested by them. They remained a source of trouble in the North West in the middle ages in spite of repeated punitive expeditions sent against them.

Another allied tribe brought into prominence at the time of early Muslim incursions were the Gakkhars, and they long continued to retain their independence both in Jhelum itself and in the neighbouring district of Rawalpindi and parts of Hazara district. They possessed great power due to their unity which enabled them to oust other tribes like Awaul, Gujars, Khattars and Janjuas.³ The origin of the Gakkhars is shrouded in mystery.⁴ The story of most of the Gakkhars is that they conquered Kashmir and ruled that region for many generations but were eventually driven back to Kabul whence they entered the Punjab in company with Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna early in the eleventh century. This story is without any foundation, because on Ferishta's showing a Gakkhar army resisted Mahmud⁵, it is at any rate certain that they held their

present possession long before the Muhammedan invasion of India.*

The *Prithviraj raso* of Poet Chand expressly takes the Gakkhars as Hindu.⁷ Ferishta too describes them as murderers of Mu'izzu'd-Din Muhammad bin Sam.⁸ All this leaves no doubt that they were originally Hindus and were converted to the Islamic faith. Ferishta's account of the Gakkhars as a tribe of wild barbarians, without either religion or morality, practising polyandry and infanticide was perhaps due to their opposition and resistance to the Muslim rule in the early days.⁹ The Gakkhars maintained their semi-independent status till they were subdued by the Sikhs.

Another tribe, the Jats, is well known in mediaeval history for their implacable enmity towards all foreign conquerors and invaders. Babur in his memoirs says that "if anyone go into Hindustan, the Jats and Gujars always pour down in countless hordes from hill and plain for loot in bullock and buffalo."¹⁰ Ibn Khurdadbah, writing in the beginning of the 10th century A.D., gives the distance from the frontier to Mansura as 80 farsangs and adds that "this route passes through the country of Zats (Jats) who keep watch over it".¹¹ During the Arab invasion of Sind the Jats and their brethren the Meds formed a considerable portion of the population.¹² They were reduced to the position of helots by Chach the Brahmin usurper of Sind.¹³ "They have" reported an ex-minister of Rai Dahir to Muhammad bin Qasim, the conqueror of Sind, "the disposition of savages and always rebelled against their sovereign. They plunder on the roads, and within the territory of Debal all join with them in their highway robberies."¹⁴ Because of this propensity to rebellion the Jats did not receive any better treatment at the hands of the Arab conquerors of Sind. In fact, during the Arab rule, too, they rebelled against their new masters, which called for punitive expeditions.¹⁵

Again it is these Jats that dared to fall upon the retreating army of Sultan Mahmud while he was returning to Ghazna laden with the booty from Somnath in the year 1026. In the beginning of the next year, 418 A.H. (March, 1027 A.D.), Sultan Mahmud led his last expedition to Hindustan to punish the Jats who had misbehaved during the Sultan's return from Somnath.¹⁶ The Jats sent their families to neighbouring islands, and constructed a flotilla of four thousand or according to another report eight thousand boats. When the Jat flotilla came into contact with the fleet of boats sent by Sultan

Mahmud, a bloody battle followed in which the Jat boats were rent asunder, and the Jats were drowned.¹⁷

Though punished severely for their arrogance and rebellious spirit, it was in their very blood to fall upon any invader, however powerful and renowned he may be.¹⁸ After the defeat of Prithviraj III in the second battle of Tara'in in 1192, the Jats of Hansi raised their standard of revolt under their leader Jatwan. The uprising was so serious in its nature that the Muslim governors had to take shelter inside the fort, and Qutbu'd-Din Aibak marched in person against Jatwan who was defeated and killed by the Delhi forces.¹⁹ It is highly improbable however that Jatwan, the leader of the Jats, "owed allegiance to Raja Bhim of Anhilvara".²⁰ The Jats rose up in arms against the Turks of their own accord because prior to Muslim conquest Hansi was ruled probably by a Tomara vassal of the Chauhans.²¹ It was situated miles away from Gujrat and there was no love lost between Prithviraj Chauhan and Bhim Deva Chalukhya.²² Therefore there was no reason for the latter to send help to those that rebelled against the enemy of Prithviraj. Moreover, it is highly improbable that Bhim Deva II of Gujrat who was busy with the internal disorders of his own kingdom, should send his men to stir up an uprising at Hansi.²³

The Jats were capable not only of rebellion to voice their grievances, they also sometimes formed Mondals or confederacy with other kindred tribes to strengthen their hands.²⁴ Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq had to undertake an expedition against one such Mondal formed by the Jats, Minas, Bhattis, Biras and Mandahars at Samana and Sunam. These disobedient and rebellious tribes had united in a confederacy and stopped paying tax. They had stopped tilling the soil, and carried on highway robbery. The Sultan marched against them via Kaithal, and Khuran.²⁵ He captured their leaders, and carried them to Delhi where they were forced to settle with their families.²⁶ The rebels, being deprived of their leaders, could not make any headway for the time being. The Jats remained turbulent and rebellious throughout the middle ages, and Timur describes, such of them as embraced Islam, as Muslim only in name.²⁷ The invader undertook an expedition against them in which two thousand of the tribe were put to death.²⁸

Another tribe notorious in the pages of contemporary chroniclers for their opposition to the Delhi kingdom was the Mewatis²⁹ or Mews, a highly composite tribe found in the hilly

country of Gurgaon, Alwar, and Bharatpur and also scattered over the Delhi district and the Bhawal *nizamat* of Nabha.³⁰

During the day of Sultan Nasir'u'd-Din Mahmud Shah, his able minister and father-in-law Ulugh Khan had to undertake several punitive expeditions against the rebellious Mewatis.³¹ Malika, the Mewati leader, terrorized the region around Hariana, Siwalik and Bianah, and did not even hesitate to carry away the camels sent from Hansi to Ulugh Khan.³² At last a strong expeditionary force under the Wazir was sent to suppress the Mewatis and their leader Malika. Thousands of Mewatis were killed by the Sultan's army, and many were captured alive. The rebellion was put down with relentless ferocity. One silver coin was awarded for bringing the head of an insurgent, while two silver pieces were offered for capturing a rebel alive. Naturally there was a regular head hunting by the imperial forces. When the prisoners were brought together some of them were thrown under the feet of elephants, some were skinned alive, and still others were done to death by decapitation. But the Mewatis were not cowed into submission in spite of such terrible chastisement, and during the reign of Sultan Ghiyas'u'd-Din Balban, they terrorized even the inhabitants of the metropolis by their raids in the vicinity of the capital. The western gate of the city used to be closed down at night for fear of the Mewatis. Whenever opportunity offered the raiders robbed the Bhists and girls of everything including their garments. The Sultan was determined to put down the Mewatis and undertook an expedition to clear the jungles of the rebels. It is quite evident that this tribe had acquired much strength because they dared to raid even the suburbs of Delhi, and the Sultan had to declare a regular war of extermination to eradicate their lawlessness from the surroundings of his own capital.³³

During the rule of the later Tughluqs the Mewati Chieftan Bahadur Nahir was the chief prop of Sultan Abu Bakar Shah, and though defeated by Sultan Muhammad, his power remained undiminished. He raided the capital during the absence of the latter in 1393. And though he was driven off with losses by the royal forces from Delhi as also his own fortress at Mewat³⁴, he retained his power and influence.

In the reign of Sultan Nasir'u'd-Din Mahmud Shah, he was placed in charge of the fortress of Delhi by Muqarrab Khan. Even after the fall of the latter, the power of Bahadur Nahir remained undiminished in Mewat. Timur imprisoned the Mewati Chieftan, who, after the departure of the former,

regained much of his power, and Khizir Khan, the Sayyidi ruler had to undertake an expedition against him. The successors of Khizir Khan also had to send several expeditions to curb the power of the Mewatis.³⁵ Throughout the middle ages the Mewatis were notorious for their lawlessness and daring.³⁶

Not only in the North West, in North-Eastern India also there were tribes with warlike habits. The Santals of Chotanagpur region were a ferocious tribe to elude whose opposition Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar on his way to Lakhnawati probably avoided the region in which they dwelled.³⁷ A description of their warlike habits comes from *Sirat-i-Firuz Shahi*.³⁸ Sultan Firuz Tughluq met them during his Jajnagar expedition.³⁹ "In this wilderness", says the author of *Sirat*, "are found savages who have never set their eyes on civilized men. They cannot understand the language of the civilized people, nor can the latter comprehend their speech (of the savages). Their dress consists of peacock-feathers, and their food the flesh of the buffaloes; the trees are their dwellings, and leaves and feathers their bed; their drinking bowels are the palm of their hands with which they sip water from stream by day and night. They are nude barefooted men, devoid of all human sentiments; they shun the haunts of men. They employ a peculiar signal when they want succour from their own tribesmen at the time of concentration of troops. (When) bodies of soldiers and men advance to attack them, one of them lops off an earlobe with a sharp instrument, and shows the fellow men blood of his person."⁴⁰ The simple affable and silly habits of the Santals, the natural beauty of the Susan flower of this region, the black colour of the people, as also the independent and warlike habits has been described by our author who was not acquainted with their name.⁴¹ According to Prof. Sukumar Sen⁴², the word *Santal* originated from the word *Simantapal* meaning the feudal retinue. It is quite probable that because of their martial spirit the Santal were given land by the Hindu rulers of Bengal in the *Simanta* or border to keep vigilance over the frontier and they stood guard against any possible invader.

Various other races and tribes scattered all over this sub-continent were noted for their daring and love of independence. The Bhattis⁴³, the Bhils⁴⁴, the Mandahars⁴⁵, and the Minas⁴⁶ are a few among those tribes that caused much headache to the Sultans of Delhi by their turbulence and love of independence. As these tribes mostly took shelter in inaccessible regions during

their unequal struggle with the Sultan's forces, they were able in many cases to retain their arrogance, and to raise standards of rebellion at occasional interval. Lack of supply and difficulties of communication account also for the failure of many expeditions in the middle ages against the rebellious tribes who took shelter in regions unknown, and inaccessible to the royal army.⁴⁷

But these tribes in their turn learnt to fear the punitive measures, and expeditions sent against them led to economic and political penetration in regions, which had hitherto remained beyond the pale of civilization. The opposition and turbulence of the tribal people made it, however, nearly impossible for the Sultans to enforce any and every regulation conceived by them over a large part of the territory which at least nominally was under their control. Tribal democracy, and love of independence of the tribal people was a positive check on mediaeval despotism. The tribal people were more militant than the peace-loving villagers, and rural politics in India presented a serious problem to every ruler who aspired to establish a stable foundation for his rule. Such experiment of the different rulers in Indian politics has led Badaoni to sum up the experience of the age in the following comment :— Tyranny and Sovereignty are like unto a candle and the wind⁴⁸ (*Zulm wa Shahi Chiragh wa bad buwad*).

NOTES

1. For the role played by the Khokhars in North-West Frontier, see Chapter VI.
2. Raverty, pp. 705-06, 839.
3. *Glossary of Races and Tribes*, Vol. II, p. 274; *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. XIV, p. 152; Griffin, *Punjab Chiefs*, pp. 575-76.
4. According to one theory which has found little support among historians they are descendants of Alexander. In the opinion of General Cunningham the Gakkhars are the descendants of Yuechi Scythians who came from the North West in the early centuries of Christian era, and were mentioned by Dionysius the Geographer as 'Savage Gangrides'. *Archaeological Survey Report*, 1863-64, Part II, pp. 22-23.
5. *Ferishta*, Vol. I, pp. 44-45; Ferishta confused Gakkhars with Khokhars. See *ante*.

6. According to J. G. Dalmierick 'Whether the Gakkhars have sprung from the Grekos whom Alexander the Great located in Pothwar, and who it is asserted continued to reign there for several centuries, or are Hindus converted to Muhammedanism or are as they themselves declare descendants of Persian kings, it is impossible now to speak with certainty.' *J.A.S.B.*, Vol. XL, 1871, part I; following Ferishta Dalmierick in his history of the Gakkhars confuses them with Khokhars.
7. *Prithviraj Raso* (Nagripracharani Granthamala No. 4), Vol. I, pp. 385-424, 430-41, relates the story of Chitralekha a Gakkhar Princess who fell in love with Husafn Khan, a cousin of Shihab-ud-Din Ghuri.
8. Ferishta, p. 105.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
10. *Memoirs of Babur* (Beveridge translation), Vol. II, p. 454.
11. E and D, Vol. I, p. 14.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 507-08, 510-22.
13. *Ghachnama*, p. 47.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 214-15.
15. E and D, Vol. II, p. 247; Kalikaranjan Qanungo, *History of the Jats*, p. 24.
16. Ferishta, Vol. I, p. 60; Nazim, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, pp. 120-21.
17. *T-i-A.*, pp. 17-18. The number of boats stated to have been possessed by the Jats is perhaps exaggerated, yet it must be admitted that the strength of the Jat flotilla was considerable, and the precautions taken by Sultan Mahmud is the best proof of its strength. Sultan Mahmud ordered the construction of a strong flotilla, and instructed that three very strong bars or branches should be firmly fixed on each boat, and placed twenty men armed with bow and arrows and large flasks of naphtha on each boat.
18. *History of the Jats*, pp. 29-30.
19. *Taj-ul-ma'asir* (A.S.B. Mss.), FF-64B, 70A, 75B; E and D, Vol. II, p. 218.
20. *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 41; Ferishta, Vol. I, p. 107.
21. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. XIII, p. 145.
22. See H. C. Roy, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, p. 1087.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 1025-27; Again for an army, to march from Anhilwara in Gujrat to Hansi, must march across territories which were already under the control of the Turkish army. So no help from Gujrat could have reached the Jats.
24. *Mondal* is not a stronghold as Elliot supposes. It means a confederacy, union of several villages or tribes for a common object and mutual assistance. Such organisation, though rare, is not unknown even now in that part of the country. It was formed for communal interest or for resisting unjust demands and making their grievances felt. Barani, pp. 483-84. *History of the Jats*, p. 32.
25. *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 164, following Badaoni fixes the date in 744 A.H. 1343 A.D.

26. Barani (p. 65) mentions that during the days of Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Balban, Shīr Khan had suppressed turbulent tribes like Khokhars, Jats, Bhattis, the Minas and Mandahars, but there is no mention of their forming any Mondal in this case.
27. Those among the Jats who embraced Islam did not give up their tribal name.
28. E. and D. Vol. III, pp. 428-29.
29. See Sir H. M. Elliot (edited by John Beames), *Memoirs on the History, Folklore and Distribution of the Races of North West Province*, Vol. I, p. 332.
30. H. R. Rose, *Glossary of the Tribes etc.*, pp. 79-80. The origin of the name Meo is disputed, some deriving it from Mewat which is said to be the Sanskrit, *Mina-vati*, rich in fish, while the Meos themselves derive it from Maheo, a word used in driving cattle. The Hindu Meos and Minas claim to be Rajputs, but are not so regarded by other Hindus.
31. T-i-N, pp. 227, 292, 305, 313-17.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 313.
33. Barani, pp. 55-57.
34. T.M.S., p. 159.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 160, 166, 179, 193, 203-05.
36. During Akbar's reign they were employed as spies (Raverty, p. 714n). Their daring has become a byword.
37. J.A.S.B., 1913.
38. *Sirat-i-Firuz Shahi* (Bankipur Mss), FF-24B-25A.
39. T.M.S., p. 129; T-i-A, p. 232; Yahya gives the starting date for the expedition as Zu'l-hijjah 761 A.H. (Oct., 1360 A.D.). Nizam-u'd-Din Ahmed however gives the date as Muharram 762 A.H. (Dec., 1360 A.D.).
40. For an extract Eng. Trans. of *Sirat-i-Firuz Shahi* by N. B. Roy, see J.A.S.B., 1942.
41. The people referred to here are evidently Santals. For a description of their habits and method of hunting see W. W. Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*, p. 213.
42. Sukumar Sen, *Bangla Sahityer Itihas*, Vol. I, p. 5.
43. Bhatti is a Ranjur sept found in the Punjab Sialkot, Gujrat Salt range and in Delhi District. (For details about their migration see W. Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the North Western Province and Oudh*, Vol. II, p. 42.) Muhammad Nazim identifies Bhatinda as the city belonging to the Bhatti tribe (*Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, Appendix J, pp. 197-203). When Sultan Mahmud was returning to Ghazna, after conquering Bhatinda in Oct. 1004 A.D., his army faced a mischance in which many men and baggage was destroyed [Renolds (trans. by), *Kitab-i-Yamini*, pp. 322-25]. It is quite possible that the Bhattis, whose leader Biji Roy had preferred death to submission, had wreaked their vengeance on the invading army. During the reign of the later Tughluq we hear of one Juljain Bhatti who co-operated with Sultan Muhammad Shah and was imprisoned by Timur (T.M.S., pp. 146, 151, 157; 165).

44. The Bhils and Kols are aboriginal tribes, and before the great Rathor conquest Marwar was probably held in the petty chieftanship by the Jats, Minas and Bhils. See *Zafaru'l-Walīh*, pp. 206-244, 256, 293 and *Rajputana District Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 230; *J.A.S.B.*, 1877.
45. The Mandahars who had formed Mondal with the Jats during the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq are a sept of the Rajputs found mainly in Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur districts as also in the neighbouring parts of the Punjab.
46. A cognate race with the Meos; according to one theory the Meos were originally Minas.
47. Raverty, pp. 678, 679.
48. Badaoni, p. 128.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

Sir H. M. Elliot, in his preface to the *Biographical Index to the Historians of Muhammadan India*, clearly states that his aim in undertaking the task of writing Indian History is to show to India's educated gentry that never in Indian history had the Indian people any voice in shaping the destiny of the country. "For history will show them", says Sir H. M. Elliot, "that certain peculiarities of physical as well as moral organisation, neither to be strengthened by diet nor improved by education, have hitherto prevented their even attempting a national independence—which will continue to exist to them but as a name, and as an offscouring of college declarations."¹ This prophecy has been falsified, yet the analysis that forced the conclusion remains. According to a more modern scholar also, G. H. Sabine, "the oriental monarchy is more truly a form of tyranny, though it is lawful after a barbarian fashion, since Asiatics are slaves by nature and do not object to despotic government."²

It is true that despotism flourished in Mediaeval India, as elsewhere in similar epochs. It is also clear that the main sources of our information, the chroniclers, were absorbed in high politics and uninterested in the common people. Still there is some evidence available, together with *a priori* considerations, to suggest that the common people were not entirely inactive and inert in the days of the Sultanate and policy had to take some note of this fact.

The Sultanate in Mediaeval India was circumscribed by various forces of opposition, and it needed men of strong personality and common sense coupled with military ability to counteract and balance the different factors both in and outside the State, in order to keep the orderly form of government in its normal course, and to save the State from being ruined by anarchy and disruption. This must have required the winning of a good deal of co-operation from the people.

The fear of Mongol invasion, whose wave had ruined Baghdad during the days of Hulagu Khan, was constantly present behind the policy of the Sultanate. Again, the existence of independent and sovereign Hindu states, and semi-

independent Hindu rulers who would take the earliest possible opportunity to declare independence, kept the Sultanate always alert to the needs of military expedition and war. The warlike tribes of India were also a constant source of anxiety, and for any infringement of their right or even some time without provocation, they did not hesitate to rise up in arms against the Turkish conquerors of India.

The aristocracy, which often was insincere in its loyalty to the reigning ruler, was moreover divided within itself in the play of cross currents of interests and racial feelings. The aristocrat's interest, however, coincided with the interest of the Sultans and in fact they together with the 'Ulama and the theologians belonged to the ruling class, and all of them had the common aim of keeping down attempts to overthrow the existing system of administration. Their opposition, mainly based on personal gains and interest, was to a large extent guided by the fear of allowing an incompetent ruler to ruin the cause of the ruling class as a whole by his failure to keep in check the forces outside the predominant section in the State. The familiar unruliness of the Amirs and Maliks, though dangerous to individual rulers specially because some among them did not even hesitate to join hands with foreigners, was not in its character and nature serious enough to jeopardize the interest of the established system of the State. It is in fact the Amirs and Maliks who were the pillars of the State; their loyalty to the system, in spite, of the inner contradiction within the ruling circle kept the normal functioning of the State in its proper form.

It is the object of this study to examine in detail our source material to form a connected picture, if possible, of the popular pressures which influenced the affairs and policies of the Sultans of Delhi in the 13th and 14th centuries. For, in the midst of manifold difficulties, most of the Sultans must have realised the importance of the obedience of the mass of the people for the maintenance of their rule. It may be argued that such pressures constituted a substantial, if largely intangible, check to tendencies towards unbridled autocracy.

It is almost certain that legal checks did not operate with the mediaeval Sultanate. The allegiance to the Caliph was a formal affair and did not materially enhance or decrease the authority of the Indian Sultan; it only illustrates the pull of Islamic tradition. The limitations imposed by Islamic Law were also largely ideal, the injunctions of theory being often

ignored in practice with impunity, in the absence of any independent authority to enforce the same (*vide* Chapter I).

The aristocracy of Amirs and Malik_s was doubtless a real political force, but it also could not provide a stable check to the royal power. In the face of a strong Sultan, its subservience contributed to despotic authority; with a weak Sultan its role was to add to anarchy and succession struggles. The aristocracy was also riddled with racial pride and factional spirit; the long-drawnout struggle between Turkish lords of foreign extraction and the Indian faction of converted Muslims is a familiar theme of sultanate history (*vide* Chapter II).

The mediaeval Sultanate was thus undeniably very much of a despotic State. Yet despots may very well be subjected to popular pressures from common people and high policy can thereby be deflected from time to time. In mediaeval times popular consciousness ran naturally in a low ebb. None the less, popular pressures constituted a not unimportant element in Sultanate politics, though their expression was of course sporadic. This has not been properly emphasised in our mediaeval histories. Yet there is some evidence pointing to this factor, though the court chroniclers, our main sources of information, were understandably not interested in this aspect of affairs.

The role of the city of Delhi may be studied from this approach. The energy which must have been bubbling over in the metropolis of Hazrat-i-Dihli, the pride of the people and their courage, the immense concentration of the multitude have all been described by the annalists and the picture is not that of a submissive inert mass, ready to accept whatever is decreed from above. The active spirit of the city has been indicated in the annals off and on. The elevation to and the maintenance on the throne of Razia seems to have been largely the city's doing. Other illustrations in the 13th century include the uprising of the sectaries in 1237, the heroic defences put up by the citizens under Bahram and Nasir'u'd-Din Mahmud, and the popular clamour which forced Balban to change his policy on at least two occasions (*vide* Chapter III).

The temper of Delhi was further indicated by the hesitations of the first Khalji Sultan, and his solicitude displayed in placating the people. The rebellion of Malik Chhaju, again, had a strong tinge of popular support. Under 'Alau'd-Din, the uprising of Haji Maula was evidently the outcome of a popular resentment against Kotwali oppression, and this most pro-

bably convinced the Sultan of the necessity of devoting himself to good administration. His efforts to check the Mongol tide were materially helped by the support of the Delhi populace. The stringent price control had an element of supplying the needs of the population of the city which was the cornerstone of the imperial edifice. This involved however rigorous interventions, the relaxation of which must have contributed to the popularity of Mubarak (*vide* Chapter IV).

The humility and loud protestations of Ghiyasu'd-Din Tughluq at the time of his accession can best be explained as efforts to win over the people of Delhi disturbed by the thought of an upstart ruler, replacing doubtless a usurper, who happened however to be the first Sultan of Indian descent. The gold scattered by Muhammad bin Tughluq after a suspected patricide must also be attributed to an anxiety to win over common people, and recalls the largesse of 'Alau'd-Din under somewhat similar circumstances. The famous removal of the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad was probably the outcome of the Sultan's displeasure with the discontented restless city and it turned out to be a great blunder which undermined the people's confidence in and respect for the ruler. The accession of Firuz Tughluq was a popular acclamation which isolated his rivals who commanded the wealth of the treasury; his recognition of public opinion was demonstrated in the device of exposing deserters from the army to public ridicule in city squares. On two important occasions, Firuz also was forced to change his policy on account of popular resistance—the clamour of the Hindus leading to a lowering of the *jizya* on the Brahmins and a merchant agitation resulting in the abolition of vexatious imposts. A popular rising led by the Firuz Shahi slaves drove Prince Muhammad Khan from power; the occupation of Delhi by Sultan Muhammad was again due to popular support. One cannot also pass over the wild resistance of the people of Delhi to Timur's occupying forces (*vide* Chapter V).

Not metropolitan Delhi alone, but provincial cities as well showed a good deal of turbulence and independent spirit. Different sources touch upon the pressure exercised on affairs by the people of cities like Ghazna, Lahore, and Multan in the North West; Lakhnawati, the 'city of rebellion', in the East; and Kampili in the South which seems to have touched off the Hindu upsurge against Muslim rule in the second quarter of the 14th century (*vide* Chapter VI).

In the history of Sultanate politics, the at least passive pressure of the rural populace, mostly Hindus, cannot be passed over. Anti-Hindu policy was most possibly directed against upper class Hindus, and the mass of the peasantry was usually left alone. The timeless democracy of old India ("the village communities are little republics", said Metcalfe) constituted a real check to the power of the Muslim conquerors who often clung to towns and fortified posts and were content with exacting a tribute. On account of a relative surplus of land over the population, excessive exactions would lead to the depopulation of a tract; restoration of cultivation again involved a good deal of appeasement of the people. Confiscation of land would merely swell the rank of the marauders who infested so many roadways, as Ibn Battuta found to his sorrow. Of course there was little question of any large-scale dispossession of cultivators by the conquerors and the revenue demands of the State had perforce to be kept within limits. The fear of popular rebellion in the countryside was all the more operative as there could be little restriction on the possession of arms. It is thus easy enough to understand why in the collection of land revenue a moderate 'middle policy', in the words of Balban, had to be followed. The burden of exploitation was quite heavy, but some sort of a check emerged again and again in the form of possible popular reaction to the demands of the State. The study of financial, economic, and administrative policies of the successive Sultans, from 'Alau'd-Din Khalji to Firuz Tughluq in particular, is a fascinating subject from this angle. Nor can one ignore the protracted resistance of the peasants in the Doab to Muhammad bin Tughluq and the probable reasons for this virtual state of civil war (*vide* Chapter VII).

Again, the turbulence of the tribal peoples must have been a headache for the Delhi Sultans and the chronicles present a mass of material relating to the unruliness of communities of common people like the Khokhars, the Gakkhars, the Jats, the Gujars, the Mewatis, the Bhils, and the Santals. The exercise of despotic royal power over the whole country was not indeed a smooth or easy job. Despotism in practice could not be entirely unchecked as the theory of a meek supine mass would imply (*vide* Chapter VIII).

Finally to round off the story, one has to remember the border difficulties experienced by the Muslim conquerors. The reverses of the successive Muslim invaders in the Kamarup region, brought about more by popular resistance than by the

local rulers, is in this connection surely illuminating enough (*vide* Appendix).

NOTES

1. Sir H. M. Elliot, *Biographical Index to the Historians of Muham-madan India*, p. xxi.
2. G. H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, p. 100.

APPENDIX

POPULAR RESISTANCE TO EARLY MUSLIM INVASIONS IN KAMARUP

Elated by his success in Bengal and after a few years in which he was busy settling the affairs of the newly conquered province, in 1206 Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar started with an army of more than 10,000 cavalry and with an ambitious design of conquering Tibet. It was difficult to stand in the way of the naked sword of the Turks, inspired by a religious zeal, and led by the swashbuckler conqueror of Bengal. 'Ali, a newly converted Mech, took upon himself the task of guiding the army from the frontier of Devkot, beyond the frontier town of Bardhankot¹, along the river Begmati², a river 'thrice as broad as Ganges', for a period of ten days till he reached a stone bridge of twenty arches. After posting two Amirs to guard the bridge the army passed over to the opposite bank. Winding the tortuous mountain tracts of the Himalayas, clattered the hoofs of the Muslim cavalry, with brandishing sabre and shining armour, throwing to the wind the ominous warning of the Rai of Kamarupa. But the tide receded from the plain that the army had reached on the sixteenth day of its march.

Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar, in spite of initial victories, thought it prudent to fall back before a vast army, about whose approach he had received reports from prisoners of war. The order of withdrawal was issued and for fifteen days the army retreated in good order³, but unfortunately for Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar, for the first time during the whole history of Turkish invasion, the invader faced a resistance more dangerous than any monarch or general in Hindustan had ever encountered.⁴ All the inhabitants of the defiles and passes had moved off burning their hearth and home, and following a scorched earth policy, in order to destroy the foreign hordes that had burst into their peaceful life. "During these fifteen days not a pound of food nor a blade of grass did the cattle and horse obtain; and all (the men) were killing their horses and eating them, until they issued from the mountains into the country of Kamarud, and reached the head of that bridge."⁵

The retreating army made a desperate rush for the stone bridge, to guard which two Amirs had been left behind by Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar. But they had left due to an enmity that had arisen between them. That by itself however would

not have mattered very much, because the desperate North-Westerners and their virulent leader would have anticipated Napoleon's feat at Lodi, had the opportunity been presented to them. But two arches of the bridge had been broken by the Hindus of Kamarupa, and the army with its bewildered leader was forced to a halt.⁸ No amount of sabre rattling could save the Muslim army which took shelter in an idol temple which perhaps further spurred the anger of the people. The Rai of Kamarupa who, cowed by the vast horde of Muslim army, had previously offered his help⁷ to Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar, now becoming aware of the helplessness of the Muslim army ordered his men to surround the temple. The initiative of the resistance movement was in the hands of the masses which followed the rear guard of the Muslims.⁸ In their attempt to break through the stockade which was placed round the temple, and in a desperate bid to find a ford in the river most of the soldiers of the retreating army drowned themselves in the river. With a few stragglers, the only remnants of a grand army after nearly three months of hazardous campaign, Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar reached Devkot. Kamarupa proved the graveyard of the otherwise successful career of Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar.

The next invasion of Assam was led by Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din 'Iwaz in 624 A.H., i.e., 1227 A.D., when his kingdom was invaded by Nasiru'd-Din Muhammad, son of Iltutmish, and he had to come hurriedly back from Assam to meet defeat and death at the hands of the Delhi forces.⁹ There is a local tradition to the effect that the Muslim army advanced as far as the Garu-Kata-Pahad (the cow-slaughter hill) about five miles east of Davaka (in Nowgong Dist.) before being repulsed.¹⁰ It was rather fortunate for 'Iwaz to have escaped the fate which Sultan Mughisu'd-Din the next invader of Assam met with.

The third invasion of Assam was led by Malik Yuzbak-i-Tughril Khan who had assumed the title of Sultan Mughisu'd-Din, most probably in the beginning of the year 1257.¹¹ It was a triumphant march, and the Rai of Kamarupa in order to save his skin offered tribute and being rudely refused shifted the burden of fighting the Turks on his people. The Rai gave order to the peasantry and the people to buy all the grain procurable in Kamarupa so that the invading army might have no provisions. Depending on the cultivated state and flourishing condition of the country Malik Yuzbak did not lay up any stock of grain, and when the time of spring harvest came, the ruler and the people of Kamarupa rose and opened the water-dykes all around, and reduced the army of invasion to a state

of helplessness which compelled them to beat an immediate retreat to Lakhnawati. The route was flooded with water, and occupied by the people of Kamarupa. The retreating army obtained a guide to bring them out of the country by conducting them towards the skirts of the mountain. After they had proceeded some few stages they got entangled among passes and defiles, and narrow roads, and were attacked in front and rear by the people of Kamarupa. The Sultan himself was struck by an arrow and was taken a prisoner. He died after placing his face to the face of his son. Thus ended the third expedition to Assam.¹²

The failure of all these attempts was largely due to geographical difficulties. But in all these cases the invaders faced stiff resistance from the people of Assam who had their own way of fighting an intruder, and against whose unique resistance all the dash and daring of the Turkish conquerors of India proved unavailing.

NOTES

1. Bardhankot was situated close to Govindaganj in Rangpur Dist.
2. Identified by Blockmann with Karotoya: *J.A.S.B.*, 1875. Some scholars, however, identify the river with the Brahmaputra. See K. L. Barua, *Early History of Kamarupa*, pp. 215-22.
3. Raverty, pp. 561-67.
4. Sir W. Raig describes it as "the greatest disaster which had yet befallen the Muslim arms in India". *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 50.
5. Raverty, pp. 568-69; *T-i-N*, p. 154.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
8. There is an inscription on a rock at North Gauhati which mentions the destruction of the Turks, presumably referring to the defeat of Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar, but it does not mention the name of the reigning king as is usual, perhaps because the initiative of the war against the Turks was largely in the hands of the people and not the ruler. See K. L. Barua, *Early History of Kamarupa*, p. 211.
9. See Chapter VI.
10. *I.H.Q.*, March, 1946.
11. Sir Edward Gait, *History of Assam*, (Second ed.), p. 37. Minhaj informed us that Prince Nasiru'd-Din had defeated and killed Rai Britu (Raverty, p. 628). According to Sir W. Haig this Rai Britu was possibly the Raja of Kamarupa who had so long defeated all Muslim invasion in his kingdom. See *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 54.
12. Raverty, pp. 764-66.

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